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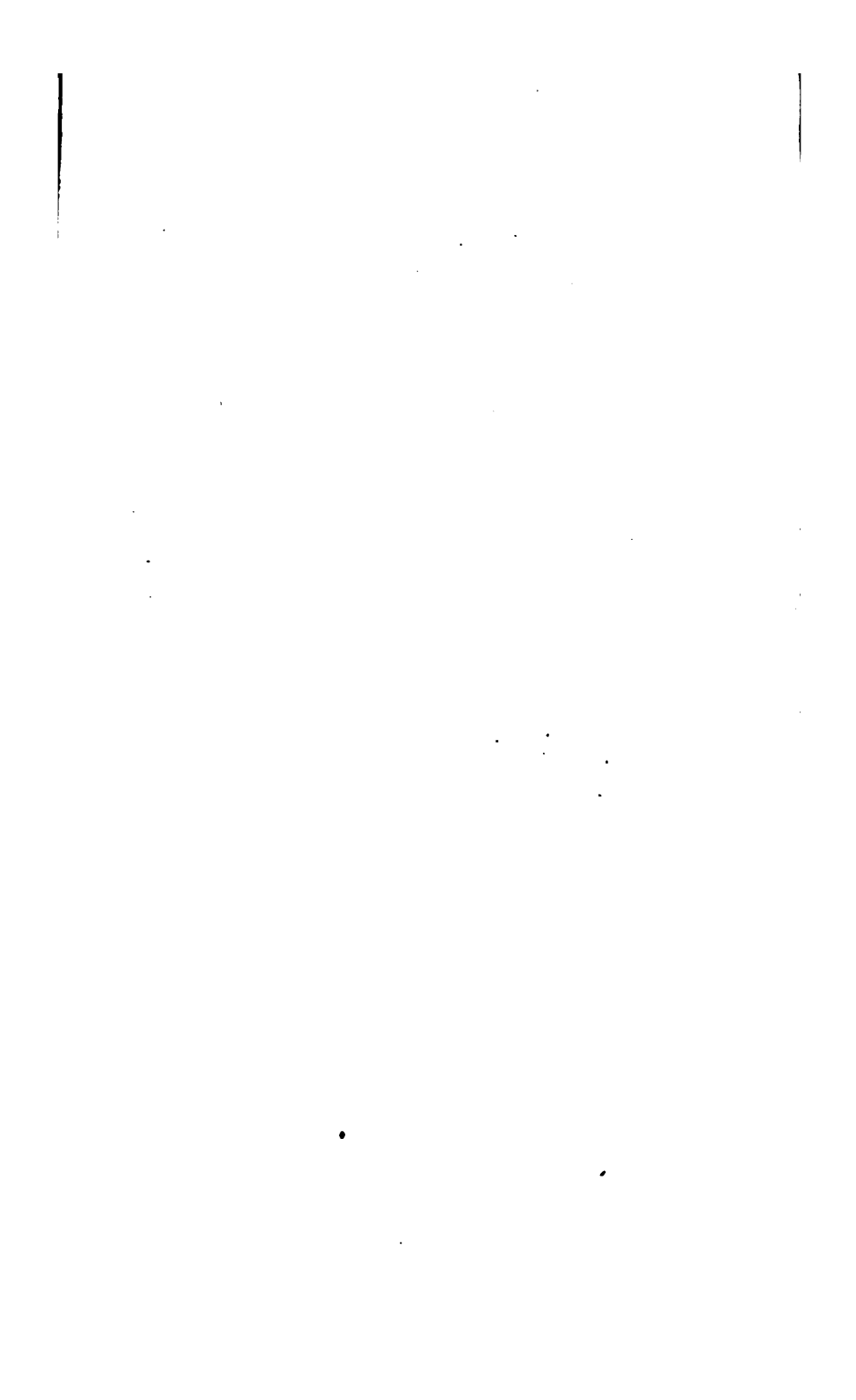


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MEMOIRS
OF
LOUIS THE EIGHTEENTH.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

VOL. I.



LONDON :
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1832.

139.

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THE
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE following Memoirs are offered to the public, with some confidence, as containing the opinions and descriptions of an individual respecting the causes and agents of the French Revolution of 1789, whose authority and testimony, as a principal actor and participator in that event, will not be disputed. Of the events of that Revolution, Louis XVIII. may justly say, "*Quorum pars maxima fui.*" The exhaustless fund of anecdote exhibited in these Memoirs, is conveyed in the royal Author's peculiar and characteristic style of quiet sarcasm, and epigrammatic point. There is indeed, over and above the witty facility and rich exuberance of anecdote which distinguish these Memoirs, a graphic power of description manifested in some of the narratives, in which scenes and persons appear to start with vital reality from the canvas, worthy of our great defunct novelist, and correspondent to the sublime associations connected with the great social eruption of 1787, of which they were the symptoms

and forerunners. Such is the scene (vol. i. page 40,) between Louis XV. and the Author, on the first intimation of the latter's marriage—the last deathful banquet of that French Belshazzar, (vol. i. page 214,)—the sombre mystery of the opening of the secret scroll signed "Death," (vol. ii. page 229,)—and the picturesque contrasts of the scene at Marly, where the guillotine headsman appears amidst the wasteful and thoughtless groupés of courtly gamblers in a blue and rose-coloured suit, (vol. ii. page 371.)—Replete with amusement as the work will be found, and exhibiting a vivid representation of high life in France before the Revolution, in which all the *dramatis personæ* are real personages—this is, in the Editor's judgment, the least of its recommendations. The Memoirs supply a complete synopsis of the cause, growth, progress, and leading characteristics of that mighty convulsion—the impulse of which is still operating; and which propagating the sphere of its influence from social circle to circle, is destined probably to a futurity of universal operation. Perhaps any extract taken at random from the ensuing pages—so indissolubly is the whole chain of revolutionary causes and effects—obvious or imperceptible—linked together,—would throw an interesting, new, or striking light on the progressive developments of the great moral pheno-

menon of 1780. No one, in contemplating the details supplied by so competent and disinterested a witness as Louis XVIII.—of the heartless and profligate levity of the court coteries—the shameful jobbing of the ministers—the licentious amours of all the most exalted characters at court—the selfish and infidel hypocrisy of the upper clergy—the ignorance and frivolity of the noblesse, and the devouring rapacity and extravagant waste of the royal favourites and their dependants,—could fail to ask himself, even if ignorant of the results to which those acts conducted, “In what can all this end but universal confusion and revolution?” The great wonder is, that hurried on as it was by so many co-operating causes, the revolutionary crisis was so long delayed. Amidst the disgust and contempt thus excited by the intriguing personages who have only themselves to blame for the violence of the reaction; pity and admiration are by turns awakened for the many noble and amiable qualities of Marie-Antoinette, intermixed as they were, beyond a doubt, with many faults; nor can the good intentions and homely kind-heartedness of Louis XVI., frustrated as they were by his too ductile indecision and the impetuous current of events, fail to awaken a sympathy with his own wish, expressed to Malesherbes, that he had been born to a private station. In that he would have

been honoured and happy, and like many other worthy men of right views and ordinary talents, have lived beloved and died respected. It is curious that throughout these Memoirs, Charles X., for whom the Author's brotherly affection is, notwithstanding, very obvious, should be exhibited in colours so unfavourable, and so well justified by subsequent events; and that most of the disasters of the first French Revolution should be ascribed to the reckless, overweening and insatiable rapacity of the Polignacs. In the "*Court of France*," as in some of the Greek dramas, the first part of the dramatic action of the Revolution is given; but not the catastrophe. The actors destined to suffer are introduced; but not the tragic *denouement*. Yet that *denouement* is never for a moment absent from the reader's contemplation. A fatal and death-dooming necessity seems throughout to overhang the house of Bourbon, as it did of old the house of Laius. The readers become bystanders, like the choruses of the same primitive drama, witnessing the operation of the distaff and the woof of the Destinies—and may watch the whole fatal tissue of causes and effects, leading to an inevitable catastrophe, without having occasion, like one of Schiller's imitative choruses, to wonder

“How the whole blood-stained tangle will unwind.”

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Pompadour—The Countess du Barry—Life of the
Young Princes—Education—Rules of conduct—
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the Sixteenth.

It is generally left to history to write the lives
of kings; but there is nothing to prevent kings
from furnishing materials for history. I feel a
pleasure in persuading myself that I write these

memoirs for the sake of the literary amusement the writing supplies: this occupation was sometimes a source of so much agreeable consolation to me in exile, that I should think myself in some degree ungrateful to neglect it, when seated on the throne. If one day these pages to which my reminiscences are confided, should be made known to future men, they will, I hope, respect this *cachet* of a familiar narrative, which sometimes authorizes minute details, at others the capricious omissions of an author who wishes to be freed from the etiquette of the historic style. When I permitted an extract* from these memoirs to be published during my life, it was for the purpose of ascertaining the difference between the eulogiums of courtiers and criticism. I shall not be accused on that occasion of having appealed to the privileges of my title. I showed that the king

* Allusion is here made to the *Voyage de Paris à Bruxelles*.

who gave a charter for the purpose of dethroning despotism and anarchy, could religiously observe the laws of the republic of letters.

I was born at Versailles, in the parish of Notre Dame, on November 17th, 1755, and was third child of the Dauphin. My eldest brother was named Duke of Burgundy; the second Duke de Berri; and I received the title of Comte de Provence. At my baptism, in 1762, I was invested with the Christian names of Louis-Stanislas-Xavier. By this means I acquired three patrons, in lieu of one in heaven, and two protectors on earth in the persons of my godfather and godmother, the first of whom was my grandfather in a direct line.

My father, the Dauphin, wished my brothers and myself to be bred up as became the sons of most Christian kings. If I am not very devout; it was no fault of our worthy governor (good man!) the Duc de la Vauguyon, who deserved canonization, if it were only for his com-

plaisance to Madame du Barri; and no doubt his charity to that illustrious and sinful personage, was considered excusable in his mind by the conduct of the Son of God to the holy Magdalen.

The Duke de la Vauguyon was justly called a worthy man. He loved his friends sufficiently to do them service; he also loved the fair sex—but he was fearful of their seductions, and showed his prudence by avoiding them. He possessed great discernment, was perfectly polite, and exhibited extraordinary perspicuity in recognizing the gale of court favour, even at the least breath that blew. He watched over us with extreme care. He was, in short, a conscientious governor, and it was impossible to be on better terms than we were with him.

M. Coetlosquet, the bishop of Limoges, was our tutor. He was one of the best and most convenient men in the world. He saw every

thing, and doubted nothing; and never gave himself the trouble to guess what his friends were at the pains to conceal from him. More attached to his breviary than to the *belles lettres*, he was always anxious to stand well with the head of the church, as the best road to heaven, or, as the malicious hinted, as the shortest cut to a cardinal's red hat. It was also whispered, that he was on good terms with the Jansenists, and on not quite so good with the Jesuits, because their funds were getting low; but for all that, he behaved very well to us, and we had no reason to be dissatisfied. His assistant tutor, the Abbé Radonvilliers, was pious and worldly at the same time: he was by turns indulgent and severe; he was endowed with wit as well as address, and had the art of concealing his ambition under an air of simplicity and disinterestedness, which deceived the most adroit.

M. de Montesquion was one of our gentlemen of the wardrobe. He afterwards shared

my confidence with the Count de Modena. I may almost say I loved him; and he only returned my regard by halves. His name will so continually appear in these memoirs, that my little weakness on this point cannot fail to be perceived.

We princes sometimes get into our heads that the friendship of those who pay court to us is real; and this blind confidence is the parent of many mistakes and many errors. Happy is the monarch who does not seek to penetrate too deeply into the human heart! Happy the king who has not had his eyes too much opened by the lessons of adversity! For myself, I have learnt to know men betimes. When divested of the delusions of rank, I was enabled to study them like an ordinary spectator; I am therefore less easy to be agreeably deceived than another; and when I have been taken for a dupe, it was because I wished to appear so—for there is some charm in that mystification.

I intended to sketch my father; but I feel that I am not sufficiently worthy to depict his virtues. His crown was not of this world; and he died young. There were some strange reports in circulation as to the manner of his death; and slander did not spare the Duke de Choiseul. After their fall, the Jesuits spared no pains to blacken his character with the most detestable suspicions. This was the cause of the coldness which my elder brother always demonstrated towards that minister; and yet I solemnly declare that he was innocent of the crime which the intriguing Abbé Georgel imputed to him.

My mother was worthy of being the wife of the Dauphin, and was, as a faithful mirror, reflecting the virtues of her husband. Their death, which took place in 1765, gave my brothers and me the greatest affliction: for notwithstanding our youth, we were able to appreciate the extent of our loss. Berry was then

the eldest, and then followed D'Artois, Clotilde, and Elizabeth. It could not then have been surmised that the royal root, having such numerous suckers, could ever have been extinct; and yet at this very day, the hopes of the line rest on a single head. If I die before Monsieur, three brothers will have successively ascended the throne, leaving a feeble infant as their solitary heir. Yet I persuade myself from his miraculous birth, that fortune, in his person, reserves great things for France.

After the death of Madame de Pompadour, for whom I always felt a degree of *éloignement*; and who obviously began to weary her royal protector, Louis XV. breathed more freely. He was like a child out of leading-strings. He enjoyed this liberty for some years, though the Marchioness d'Esparbe did her utmost to induce him to abandon it. He escaped her manoeuvres, but it was only to be caught in a net of cunninger design. The most illustrious

monarch of Europe became the slave of a *grisette*, or, in other words, of that Madame du Barry, whose beauty was, I apprehend, her only recommendation. It was a strange spectacle for France to see this woman retaining power for five or six years; a woman to whom caprice might accord one night, but who was more lucky than the sultana in the Arabian Nights, in being able to amuse her royal lover beyond a *thousand and one*. It was by this impropriety the crown lost a portion of its lustre, and the reign of the unfortunate Louis XVI. broke the last spell that adhered to it.

Our grandfather had a peculiar manner of looking at royalty. He only occupied himself with the present day, and gave himself no trouble about the future events. He committed faults, and paved the way for the revolution which caused the ruin of his family.

As soon as our father was dead, we commenced, as it were, an entire new æra. To

piety and restraint succeeded more worldly arrangements, which, to say the truth, were not displeasing. We saw all our *ci-devant* saints suddenly metamorphosed into gay and gallant cavaliers, our religious exercises superseded by diversions of all kinds, more conformable to our age and tastes. The great object of those in authority over us was not to limit us, but to please us: in short, we soon understood that we were at perfect liberty to do just as we pleased.

The Dauphin and I continued our studies, because we derived pleasure from them; but D'Artois, less devoted to letters, took advantage of his freedom to desist. I endeavoured to recall him from inaction, but he replied that a son of France ought to handle the sword, and not the pen. Great prognostics were drawn from this chivalrous phrase at Versailles. It remains to be seen whether they will be realized or not. I persisted therefore in my studies, and far from relaxing, devoted myself to them

with renewed ardour. My resolution did not seem to please my preceptors. The solicitude of these worthies was so great respecting me, that they would have readily taken on themselves the charge of thinking, acting, and speaking for me, in order to spare me the trouble. The obstacles which I threw in the way of this their charitable endeavour, seemed to them like an act of ingratitude, and became the germ of the prejudice and disfavour with which my youth was surrounded. The weakness of my younger brother (the Count d'Artois) appeared a virtue to that class of politicians who wish to establish an empire over the minds of princes, which is generally not perceived till it is too late to shake off the yoke. Yet I must confess that I was less calculated than he to win the love of the nation. I had a natural reserve in my manner, which kept at a distance individuals who wished to obtain an intriguing influence over me. This reserve was called pride. I

did not lavish my attentions on all females without exception ; I was therefore accused of not liking them. It was impossible but I must be a bad master, since no one could rule me. My reserve passed for duplicity, my application for disguised ambition. My dislike to *eclat*, and even my memory, were made crimes ; my tastes, actions, and words, were calumniated, even my silence ; and I was reproached so often with aspiring to the throne, that my calumniators finished by prompting me to render myself worthy of it, should Providence ever destine me to fill it.

In this manner I breathed from my youth up in an atmosphere of disfavour. In proportion as I advanced in the career of life, I had to contend with ingratitude, sometimes on the part of the clergy, sometimes on that of the *noblesse*.

The Dauphin, afterwards the unhappy Louis XVI., was not better appreciated than me, notwithstanding his almost perfect virtues, and his

desire to promote the public weal. He was good-intentioned, but he wanted firmness; his tact was good, but he had a great and unfortunate want of confidence in himself. He was never a favourite with the court; he was too alien to its manners, and had he not the skill to attract the people to him while he repelled the court, and there are emergencies when it is necessary for a sovereign to know how to choose between one or the other.

CHAPTER II.

Mode of educating the French Princes of the blood—The Count de Provence calumniated to the Dauphin—The Duke de Choiseul—The Duchess de Grammont—Bonmot of the Duke d'Ayen—Cabals at court—Fall of the Prime Minister—The Duke d'Aiguillon—Portrait of Louis XV.—What he thought and said of his Grandson—The Duke d'Orleans—The Duke de Chartres—The Prince de Condé—The Duke de Bourbon—The Prince de Conti—The Count de la Marche.

MY traducers, not content with depreciating me in the eyes of the nation, succeeded at length in exciting the prejudices of the Dauphin against me, under the pretence that I employed my critical talents at his expense, and ridiculed some of the barbarisms of his language. Ca-

lummy had, indeed, its great and little *entrées*, and spared nobody. The Duke de Choiseul was then premier, and of course the focus of all malice and of all intrigues. But these intrigues were not set in motion publicly; he was too much feared for that. He was the exact beau-ideal of a *grand seigneur*. Imperious, haughty, and making more noise than doing work in all he did; he was at the same time a man of wit and good sense, but sold body and soul to Austria; a Lorrainer more than a Frenchman; an implacable enemy; a zealous friend; prodigal of his own means as well as those of others; devoted to women and philosophers; a skillful negociator; possessed of talent to be on good terms with the parliaments, the literati and the artists at one and the same time. In fine, he appeared to have established himself on a pedestal which seemed insubvertible. But in the midst of all this triumph, he was the slave of his proud sister, and, under her influence, was on the point

of coming in collision with one, who from nothing, had raised herself to participate my grandfather's throne. Destiny was against him, and, more than all, his sister the Duchess de Grammont. This lady, ordinary in person, and unpossessed of the least grace, with the exterior of a virago, haughty and passionate, and aiming at the amalgamation of politics and love, took it into her head one fine morning, by the aid of her imagined attractions, to carry the heart of the king (Louis XV.) by assault. Her sole desire was to succeed, cost what it might, to the vacant supremacy of Madam de Pompadour. It appears that her attack was indeed violent; for the monarch, not very ambitious at any time of being vanquished in these kind of battles, where the glory of being victor is not very desirable for a king, made a point from that time of evading a repetition of any such terrible *tête-a-têtes*.

On this subject the Duke d'Ayen uttered a rather piquant *bon-mot*.

A zealous parliamentary, and staunch apostle of Choiseul and his sister, was making some remark in his presence on the violence employed by the king towards the parliament of Bretagne. "The king," said he, "offers violence to justice." "That may be," said the duke, "but he does no more than the Duchess de Grammont did to him."

This duchess looked at all the ladies of the court with an eye of envy. Some she stared out of countenance—to some she exhibited the sullen. To be pretty was quite sufficient to attract some mark of her ill-humour, and if by chance the royal eye rested with any token of predilection on any attractive countenance, instantly Madam de Grammont was all activity, and left no stone unturned till she had by her calumnies blackened the character of the presumed favourite in the mind of the king. As to the *parc aux cerfs*, she never lost sight of it; and acted the part of a never sleeping Argus in that direc-

tion. But Madam du Barry was destined to destroy this dragon guardian of the golden fruit there preserved ; to triumph without fighting, and to establish herself in the heart of the citadel before her approach was suspected.

She however resolved not to give in, and induced her brother De Choiseul, to enter the lists against the victor ; who, meanwhile, having no malice to gratify, and desirous only of enjoying the royal favour in peace, declined for a long time to pick up the glove of defiance they threw down to her ; nor did so, till driven to it at the last extremity.

The Duke de Choiseul, who really felt an inclination to discover every possible charm in the new favourite, was induced to declare against her by the passions of his sister. But this was a *mal-adresse* on his part, and he ought, as a politician, to have foreseen the issue of the combat.

He had for successor the Duke d'Aiguillon,

a man without talent, despised and hated by universal France, at once the lover and *valet* of Madam du Barry; a bad diplomatist, a great talker; living from hand to mouth, without care for the morrow; governing the state at full gallop; taking with both hands, or not preventing others from taking; rash, inconsiderate, and more conversant with the world than endowed with the tact of talent.

The king (Louis XV.) surnamed the *bien aimée*, who cared nothing for the prosperity of the state, provided he could pursue his personal gratification undisturbed, had no real confidence in his ministers.

He supported them as a necessary evil, as any wealthy master supports his steward, because he thought that if he changed them, he should not get others to do better. Replete with gallantry to the fair sex, he concluded his career of devotion to them by the coarse propensities of a man of low company; and he was

attached to Madam du Barry because she offered his palled appetite the excitement of novelty, and because she was different from all the fair ones of the courtly seraglio, to whom he had before thrown the handkerchief.

Whatever love this good king might have had for his daughters, he exhibited none for us his grandchildren. He never troubled himself to inquire how we went on with our studies, or whether we were comfortable or unhappy. However, this reflection could not trouble him much, since he had given orders to anticipate all our desires. I cannot tell why he showed less regard to me than to my brothers; yet I strove to win his good graces. I smiled on his favourite, and even gave her, on occasions, a furtive glance of friendship. But I gained nothing by my innocent *manège*. The king always fancied he could discover an under-current of thoughtful design in my most simple actions; and I recollect that when my marriage with

the Princess of Piedmont was on the tapis, the ambassador charged with the matrimonial negotiation having apprized the king that there were reasons for inferring that my intended bride would not have children, his majesty remarked, "So much the better; the provençal (so he called me) must then concentrate his ambitious projects on himself."

Meanwhile he always looked on D'Artois with a more indulgent eye. He recognized his own character in him; and often addressed him with a half smile of satisfaction, which gave us much food for reflection.

CHAPTER III

Marriage of the Dauphin—House of Lorraine—Marie-Antoinette—Character of her intimate Friends—Motives of her resentment against the Prince de Rohan—Negociations on this subject—Sketch of M. Cheney, the first Valet de Chambre to the Count de Provence—Bonnefoy, his assistant—Secret Lessons—First Adventure of the Count de Provence.

THE marriage of my elder brother with Marie-Antoinette displeased me greatly, I confess. Austria had so many interests opposed to those of France, that I dreaded the introduction of an archduchess amidst us. I knew the weakness of the Dauphin, his ductility to be guided by others, and I feared the predominance which his

wife would necessarily obtain over him. I could have wished that they would have given him any other wife than an Austrian, but I was not consulted. The princess arrived, well provided with a list of those who were especially to share her good graces. They were chiefly Lorrainers and descendants of the Guises. However, the fortunate star of her mother enabled her to place about her person a Frenchman, (but Austrian in heart,) the Abbé de Vermont, a mysterious personage, always behind the curtain, but whose immense influence was only so much the greater, as it was never apparent. It was he who governed my sister-in-law up to the latest period, and every evening, before he went to sleep, he turned over in his mind the means of obtaining some advantage for Austria. In other respects, destitute of capacity, ignorant of business, valuing none but marplots and intriguers, and keeping in the back ground while he made puppets of his friends, he resembled

the spider, which weaves its web in the dark, in order to be more certain of its prey.

Marie-Antoinette placed unlimited confidence in this counsellor, who succeeded in alienating her from us, and prejudicing her mind against the sincerest partisans of the monarchy. I flattered myself with occupying the first rank among the last, and consequently she at all times treated me with coldness, unless she intermingled with its indication a fear of my ambition, which was understood to desire the grandeur of France to the detriment of Austria.

The archduchess, on her first appearance, won all hearts. She was beautiful, fascinating, complaisant; she perfectly dazzled us, and her success was complete. She was invested with the honours of a divinity, which even eclipsed those of the fortunate sultana. The Choiseuls, moreover, gave the word, and as they expected every thing from the Dauphiness, they had resolved to refuse her nothing.

This idolatry lasted till her accession to the throne, and in eight days after, the queen had already lost the half of what the Dauphiness had gained. The court commenced the work of disrobing the idol of its pageantries, and the people completed it, by breaking the idol to pieces. To speak the truth, my sister-in-law neither deserved the hatred against her, nor the infatuation in her favour.

The queen loved her children and the king ; perhaps they were all she really loved in France, with the exception of Madame de Polignac, who, in obtaining her estimation, became little less than a new member of her family, for she regarded her with the affection of a confidential sister. In this she was to blame. Madame de Polignac was not possessed of any of those qualities which can be useful in a favourite ; she employed her influence solely in enriching herself and her creatures ; she was surrounded with nullities, of whom she made a kind of rampart

round the queen, with a view to render her invisible to all who were strangers to the sphere in which she lived. War and peace, external or internal administration, were here made minor matters to the acquisition of a *tabouret*, a blue *cordon*, a *toque* in the newest fashion, or a head-dress of feathers. These were the great interests which occupied this frivolous court, where it was thought that the best method of employing time was dancing, singing, performing theatricals, or superintending the workmen while making preparations for a new fête. Neither the men nor the women disdained these occupations, which passed for the supreme of *bon ton*. Above all, it was necessary, at any price, to obtain money, in order to support a ruinous pomp, which concealed a fearful abyss in its rear. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if those thoughtless persons saw the revolution arrive, without any misgiving of the fate which it was preparing for them; and they only knew

what it really meant when they became its victims. Unhappily, the innocent were engulfed along with the guilty in a common shipwreck.

I shall always remember the first moment of Marie-Antoinette's *debât*, which placed her on terms of intimacy among us. Her first glance was directed eagerly on the countenance of her husband, then on the king and on the rest of the family. I have no idea why her examination dwelt so long on me. She addressed me in gentle accents, and requested my friendship in return for her's, which, she said, I already possessed. She only wished to live for us; and to sacrifice her own predilections to ours. Honey dropped from the lips of the archduchess, nor had she any reason to be dissatisfied with the compliment I made her in exchange.

From that day my brother followed his young and fascinating wife like a slave. At first the Dauphiness was not unwilling to extend her

complaisance towards the favourite, and was only deterred from doing so by perceiving how odious Madame Du Barry was to my brother ; an affront, of which the latter was the instigator, confirmed her subsequently in this resolution.

I was one evening with the Dauphin when my sister-in-law came in, her countenance bathed in tears, her eyes lighted up with emotion, and her voice trembling with indignation. We eagerly inquired the cause of her trouble, and she told us that the evening before, at the royal supper table, the Countess Du Barry had publicly read a letter of Prince Louis de Rohan, in which that diplomatist made himself merry at the expense of the Empress Maria Theresa. To attack her mother was a crime beyond redemption in her eyes, and she was anxious to inflict chastisement on the offender.

But how? To be revenged on the favourite was

out of the question ; but Prince Louis was not beyond her reach, for no one defended him with zeal, and he became from that moment the scape-goat of the Dauphiness ; she demonstrated her feeling towards him on a thousand occasions, and she lost no time, when she ascended the throne, to recall him from his embassy.

In short, the emotion of Marie-Antoinette appeared so sincere, that I was affected by it ; but the Dauphin was enraged. The court learned the dissatisfaction of my sister-in-law, and the privy councillors of the favourite became alarmed. All subjects of dispute, it is said, are deniable, and it was consequently resolved to deny the fact of this. It was wished at first to put the king forward, but he declined, and pretended ignorance of the whole affair. But to make amends, he privately sent emissaries to his son, the Dauphin, to intimate that he should regard any resentment cherished

against Du Barry as a personal injury. At first the Dauphin refused to be pacified; but his wife, more prudent, seeing that matters had proceeded far enough, engaged him to look over the offence, and peace was re-established.

It was resolved to marry me about this time, and, according to custom, I was the last person to be consulted in the matter. It was almost by the *Gazette*, in the first place, that I learnt that I was betrothed to the Princess of Piedmont, who was coming to claim me as her husband. But before I come to the details of my marriage, I am desirous of recording some of the singular passages of that epoch of my life which now occur to my memory.

I had a first valet de chambre, named Quatresous de la Motte de Cheney, of parliamentary family, and perfectly infatuated with his nobility of origin, which he would hardly have felt disposed to exchange with mine, although the root of his genealogical tree was

tolerably recent. This M. de Cheney superintended me with extreme vigilance, so much so that it would have seemed as if he was charged with the care of my virtue as well as of my person, and that he was held responsible for both.

This individual, who was in other respects a very worthy man, was one of the most insipid personages in the world, and I had some difficulty in restraining myself from telling him so twenty times a day. His respectful attention overwhelmed me; his probity gave me a nervous attack; in short, I could not endure him. He could not be unaware of this; but he remained the same, a permanent Argus, placing himself between me and all the pretty maids of honour who crossed my path; for I should have said that my family had some time previously consigned to these young ladies the honour of superintending our *début* in the world.

Woe then to her who was unlucky enough to

appear where I was at the same moment as the vigilant Cheney. It was his custom to stare them out of countenance, and sometimes to elbow them rudely out of the way. This *brusquerie* ridiculously contrasted with my gracious smile, and the eloquent glance I never failed to bestow on the lady, with a view to make her some amends for the rudeness of my *valet de chambre*. However, the latter had a formidable rival near my person, in the Sieur Bonnefoy, one of my subordinate valets de chambre, a fine, tall fellow, well-looking, about five-and-twenty—a sad rake, a devotee to the fair sex, a professed gambler, a gourmand, an inveterate liar, witty, and wicked; in short, he had all the vices which generally make these gentry the favourites of masters, who wish to enjoy an unrestrained liberty in pursuit of pleasure.

Accordingly, the Sieur Bonnefoy stood high in my good graces; and he deserved no less by

the zeal he demonstrated in making himself agreeable to me. He had always some drolleries to tell me; he amused me; he flattered my vanity; treated me as a reasonable personage, and manifested an ardent desire to set me free from the leading-strings of my station. He procured me a multitude of books, which struck me as very curious; I derived new ideas from them, and their perusal may be said to have constituted the second stage of my education.

By this means, I was much less of a novice than my elder brother. He had all the innocence of a young girl: I and D'Artois often laughed at his timidity and awkwardness towards females; he was, in fact, always in such a fright in the presence of them, that I firmly believe, if he dared, he would have run away from a *tête-à-tête* with one, as if from the manifestation of Satan himself. However, when it became a question to marry him, it was

thought necessary to instruct the *Prince Sauvage* as to the nature of his new duties; and the Duc de la Vauguyon, in his quality of governor, took this office to himself. There were, I believe, many preparatory conferences on this momentous matter, and I am ignorant of the exact result; but I know that the Dauphin one day came to us in a great passion, asserting that a trap had been laid for him, and from that moment he never turned his eyes on a woman, but always manifested the greatest repugnance to their company.

However, he softened a little when presented to the charming Marie-Antoinette. I could relate many ludicrous particulars on this subject, if propriety (*les convenances*) did not restrict me from making the public the confidante of such affairs.

[Louis XVIII. next relates a ludicrous, but indelicate, anecdote of the mode in which he was prepared for his own marriage with the

Princess of Piedmont; by an intrigue with an opera figurante, which, though characteristic of the times, and of the writer, the Editor thinks it due to the *convenances* of English society to suppress.]

CHAPTER IV.

The Count de Provence is to be married—The Princess de Piemont—Their new Establishment—The Marquis de Bièvre and Doctor Lieutaud—Cromot Dubourg—Family intrigues—The Abbé de Vermont—Louis XV. informs the Count de Provence, in a whimsical manner, of the resolution to marry him—The Choiseuls—Cause of the want of cordiality between the Count and the Dauphiness—The Regiment of Provence is conferred on him—Remark of the King on this subject.

I WAS no more consulted on the subject of marriage establishment, than I was about my wife. My first gentleman of the chamber was the Marquis de Caumont, (La Force,) a man of haughty birth but humble merit. The next was the Duc de Laval, (Montmorenci,) who was

a passionate admirer of the favourite, high in her favour, and very anxious to obtain mine, which I declined to confer. The Marquis de Bièvre was my *ecuyer ordinaire*, one of the new noblesse, son of a marshal, who had been a first surgeon to Louis XV., and who gave himself a title on his own authority. I laughed at his vanity, though I liked the man. He had wit at command; but he had a fatiguing mania for punning. *Au reste*, I never admitted him to any intimacy, although he has taken the liberty to boast of it.

Lieutaud was my physician. In this age of almost general incredulity, he was ridiculous enough to believe in the efficacy of medicine and physicians. I used to amuse myself with contradicting him, and played more than one hoax upon him. He would have sold himself to the devil twenty times, if he had been as firmly convinced of his existence as of that of Esculapius; and as to the being of a God,

an atheist in the wonders of medicine was, according to him, worse than an atheist in religion, since it was possible to doubt the existence of the soul ; but how doubt the existence of the body ?

My general superintendent in the beginning, and in the end the entire *factotum* of my establishment, was Cromot Dubourg, first cashier, a man of ability, accurate, but severe, and feared by all who came under his jurisdiction. In a word, he was just one of those subaltern tyrants, whom princes stand in need of to keep their dependents in good order. I left this charge entirely to Dubourg, and could not have done better. In other respects, he was a man of gallantry, and a great admirer of the fair sex.

I have before referred to the Abbé de Vermont, the secret director of Marie-Antoinette. I am not exactly aware why this person had a greater distaste for me than any one else. Per-

haps it was, that being early in my detection of him, I had expressed my opinion to a good soul about the court, who, of course, lost no time in communicating to the Abbé the nature of my confidential strictures. From that moment, he became my sworn enemy, and never neglected an opportunity of doing me all the mischief in his power. He was of the Choiseul faction ; consequently detested Madame Du Barry, and made the complaisance which I thought it my duty to show to the king's favourite, a crime with Marie-Antoinette. He was the source of the division between the Dauphiness and me, and threw a rampart between us which for ever kept us asunder. It is chargeable to the Abbé Vermont, that before the death of Louis XV. there was already rivalry and deadly feud in the interior of the royal family.

As soon as my marriage with the Princess of Piemont was decided, the Duc de la Vau-

guyon came to inform me that the king desired to speak with me. I felt a little trepidation at this order, which was out of the ordinary rule, and the motive for which I could not divine; for I never saw Louis XV. except in the company of D'Artois at prescribed hours. An especial audience with his Majesty, unsolicited on my part, gave me much food for reflection. I turned over in my mind all the series of faults with which I might be reproached; and although my conscience did not reproach me with more than the common little peccadilloes of young men, it was not without considerable fear that I presented myself before the king.

He was alone in his closet, and was standing with his back resting on a large inlaid bureau, which occupied the side of the apartment near the window. He was playing, when I entered, with a pretty greyhound to which he was much attached. I advanced towards his majesty with

a timid and embarrassed air; but I soon perceived that he was in good-humour, from the manner in which he replied to my customary compliment. We had all our nickname in the family, and Louis XV. never employed them except when he was pleased.

“Good morning, Provençal,” he said; “you seem in excellent health. So much the better; for, by my faith, you never stood more in need of it. You are to be married.”

“I have been apprized of the orders of your majesty.”

“But some little thing may have been omitted,” replied he, laughing; “I have not much time to spare, and I therefore let you know in time, that I wish to be a grandfather as soon as possible.”

“I need not say, sire, that my duty is to obey your majesty in all things.”

“I have no doubt of your zeal; and therefore I hope, that with the blessing of favourable

circumstances, you will make a point of outstripping the Dauphin, in showing it."

I replied by a respectful bow, accompanied by a half suppressed smile, the expression of which seemed greatly to amuse his majesty. Then resuming his ordinary grave and majestic physiognomy, he added—

"I wished to see you alone, to inform you that I expect you to take the greatest care that your wife may never forget the respect she owes to the Dauphiness. Their families are in opposition to each other; but here they must forget all rivalries which may disturb the tranquillity of Versailles, and would greatly displease me. I know that you are endowed with a judgment beyond your years: and therefore I am willing to trust that you will not permit any cause of dissatisfaction to be offered to the Dauphiness. Your brother, moreover, would not submit to it; he loves his wife, and is anxious to have her respected as she deserves to be.

Watch, therefore, over your's. In short, take care that every thing proceeds so smoothly in your mutual domestic arrangements, as to prevent my being called on to interfere."

I assured his majesty that the task of my duty would be the more easy, since I had the sincerest desire to be on good terms with my brother and sister-in-law. "I know," I added, "the respect that I owe to your majesty, and that also which the heir apparent has a right to expect from me, and I trust I shall never be charged with having failed in either."

"That's extremely well," replied the king; "but I fear, notwithstanding your good intentions, that you will find yourself surrounded with flatterers too ready to turn your head; and that all your talent, by the aid of evil counsellors, will only prompt you to the committal of absurdities."

I warmly denied the probability of this, and added, "Since your majesty has deigned to

touch the subject, permit me to observe, that my sister-in-law has about her an individual by no means calculated to preserve the good intelligence of the family. I dread the over partiality of the Abbé de Vermont for the house of Austria."

"Yes, my dear child," returned the king, using for the first time this paternal expression, "I know the Abbé bears us no great good will; but how can I remove him from the person of a young female whom he has brought up, and who places her confidence in him? It will be for the Dauphin to keep him in due bounds; and now, having confided to you the source of my inquietude, I am more at ease: for above all things, it is my supreme desire that the peace of my family shall never be disturbed."

With these words the king dismissed me, and I returned greatly relieved from the fear with which the contemplation of this audience had impressed me. It took place about the year

1770, a few days before the disgrace of the Duc de Choiseul. That disgrace, which was brought about by the assistance which Madame Du Barry, in self defence, gave to the instigations of the two Ducs de Richelieu and Aiguillon, and the Chancellor Maupeou, was a fatal blow to the Dauphiness. She loved the minister, whom her mother had especially recommended to her patronage; for he was also extremely devoted to the empress. As to the Dauphin, he neither loved nor esteemed him, and never failed to make his feelings manifest by the use of unkind expressions, whenever he found an opportunity.

It was with pleasure, therefore, he saw the duke's disgrace, and never attempted to dissemble it; while his wife was compelled to conceal the chagrin she felt. She, however, could not abstain from asking me, ironically, before her husband, if I had congratulated Madame Du Barry on her victory.

"No, madam," I replied, "I prefer offering my condolences to those whom the victory mortifies; for it is the first duty of Christian charity, to sympathize with the afflicted."

The Dauphiness blushed, and turned aside her face to conceal her confusion.

"As for me," said my brother, "I am equally indifferent to the victor and the vanquished."

"I hope," replied the Dauphiness, "you make some distinction in your estimate of the Duc de Choiseul and the favourite."

"Certainly: I estimate him a little below her; for he is doubly reprehensible; because we naturally expect better things from a man of his rank, while Madame Du Barry only acts according to the bent of her previous habits."

Here the conversation finished; my sister-in-law having obviously no wish to protract it.

At the commencement of 1771 the king con-

ferred on me the regiment de Provence, at that time commanded by the Chevalier de Virieu. I should have wished to obtain permission to have passed some time at my quarters, in order to make myself better known to my countrymen ; but this permission my grandfather refused, observing to my aunts, who had taken on themselves the task of expressing my inclinations to him, " The French king's brothers ought not to be soldiers except in title. The best way to secure the peace of the state, is to separate the princes of the blood from the army. The Count de Provence must therefore content himself with making war on the deer in the park of Versailles."

This was sufficient. From that moment I bade adieu to the career of arms. I was quite resigned to my destiny ; yet I trust I have shown during my life, that I have not been frightened by danger : and that at all events, I do not resemble certain heroes of my acquaint-

ance, who have obtained a reputation for courage, which they have always been at the pains to falsify, whenever they had the opportunity of putting it to the proof. He did not disguise from me his dissatisfaction at my martial propensities. I excused myself by saying, that my sole motive was a desire to exhibit the same courage as had signalized the great men of my family.

“There is a duty of not inferior merit,” replied his majesty, “and that is, to give an example of obedience to such members of the family as show an opposite inclination.”

CHAPTER V.

The Duke de Bourbon—His wife—Reply made to her by Bonaparte—Father Hyacinthe Sermet—His piquant repartees—Marriage of the Count de Provence—Anecdote respecting it—Rudeness of the Dauphin—The Princess of Piedmont testifies a wish to make herself agreeable to her husband—Domestic details—The Duchess de Brancas—The Countess de Valentinois—How the Count de Provence and his wife conducted themselves towards Madame Du Barry—Quarrel between the Dauphin, the Dauphiness, and the Count de Provence—Results of it.

ON the 2nd of February 1771, the king appointed the Duke de Bourbon, eldest son of the Prince de Condé, a chevalier de l'Ordre. He was born in 1771, and had married, the year preceding his appointment, Mademoiselle

d'Orleans. I have referred to him before. Great hopes were built on this prince, which he never realized: though brave and generous, he was deficient in the qualities which constitute great men. Indifferent as a politician, he was out of place except at the head of an army. In one word, he was just such a prince as all princes ought to be, for the well being of the state; for princes of great talent are too much prompted to indulge in ambitious intrigues. His conduct, during his emigration, was irreproachable: unfortunately, it was somewhat belied by his subsequent conduct.

His wife became mad shortly after their marriage, for certainly no other description than mental alienation could be given to her extravagancies and eccentricities. For a considerable time she imagined herself to be in direct communication with the beings of another world. She thought, for example, that M. de Roquefeuille, who was really dead and buried, and with

whom, during his life, she maintained an intimate connexion, visited her after his death, and that with so much assiduity, that she was occasionally tired of his numerous visits; for several individuals, who went to pay their respects to her, heard her say, on entering, "Adieu, Roquefenille; you had better go now, my friend, for you have been here four hours without saying a word. I shall, of course, see you again in the evening."

Subsequently, the duchess did not manifest the indignation which the horrible assassination of her son, the Duke d'Enghien, was calculated to arouse: indeed, it seems that afterwards she made an overture to Bonaparte to be permitted to re-enter France, a proposition to which the latter replied in a manner worthy of himself. "Tell the Duchess de Bourbon," he said, "that she can never enter France but when I depart from it. I am sorry for her, but I cannot permit her recall."

On the 2nd of February, the king held in his private apartment a chapter of the order. On this occasion the sermon was preached by a Carmelite, Father Hyacinthe Sermet, a monk belonging to the monastery of the Augustins of Toulouse, who had been appointed to preach during the Lent of this year. He was a witty monastic, believing more in the art of rising in society than in God; tolerably regular in his conduct, and possessed of sufficient talent to amuse me, when he came to pay his respects. Whenever I attacked him, he was always ready with a piquant repartee, to which his Gascon accent imparted additional point. He asked me one day to get him made a bishop; and having, in lieu of the bishoprick, offered him a brevet of captain in my regiment, "I shall be happy to take it," he replied, "provided it be accompanied with a marshal's *bâton*."

"You would like to be a cardinal, then, father Hyacinthe?"

“ And even pope, with the blessing of the Holy Ghost.”

“ But that is ambition.”

“ Rather call it, monseigneur, resignation to the will of God.”

I was quite edified by the father's exhibition of confidence in God.

My nuptial day approached, and I looked forward to it with impatience, as the period when my independence would be established.

To say the truth, I was still destined to remain under the surveillance of two or three mentors, whom the king had placed about my person; but nevertheless, I could not help being more my own master than I was at that time; it was therefore with unfeigned joy that I heard that the ceremony was at length fixed for the 14th of May, 1771.

The Baron de Choiseul was on this occasion appointed ambassador extraordinary to the King of Sardinia, my future father-in-law: he arrived

at Turin on the 7th of April, and after residing three days, according to etiquette, at the house of the Marquis d'Ormaus, the governor of the city, demanded, in a public audience of the king, who received him on his throne, surrounded by all the members of his family, the hand of the Princess Marie-Josephine-Louise for the grandson of Louis XV. The proposal was graciously received; the Baron de Choiseul presented my portrait to the princess; the contract of marriage was signed on the 6th of April, and on the 21st the celebration took place by proxy in the chapel of the palace. On the conclusion of the ceremony, M. de Sainte-Croix, the secretary of embassy, came from Turin to Versailles, to apprise us of the news, which I received with a certain degree of emotion. I was now legitimately married.

My wife entered Lyons on the 3rd of May, stayed there till the 6th, when she slept at Roanes, the 7th at Moulins, and the 8th at

Nevers. The king set out on the 11th from Versailles, at two o'clock, to meet her, accompanied by the Dauphin, the Dauphiness, the bridegroom, and Mesdames Adelaide, Victoire, and Sophia. The meeting took place at the foot of the mountain de Mourons. As soon as the Countess de Piedmont perceived the approach of his majesty, she alighted from her carriage, and went to meet him; he at the same time alighted from his carriage, and as soon as she approached she knelt, according to the usual ceremonial. His majesty graciously raised her, and tenderly embraced her. I, meantime, stood close by his side, devouring the princess with my eyes, and found her more attractive than I expected, for I had not depended much on the portrait of her which had been sent me. She was, however, neither handsome, nor even pretty, but I was pleased with her. I demonstrated this by my countenance, and was the first after the king to embrace her; for his ma-

jesty, in consideration of the event, had given me precedence of the Dauphin. The rest of the family followed. My brother and sister-in-law, and my aunts, saluted her very amicably. We then re-entered our carriages to return to Fontainebleau, and the Countess de Provence took her seat by the side of his majesty.

In the evening we supped in public. At the royal table were his majesty, the Dauphin, myself, my wife, Mesdames Adelaide, Victoire; Sophia, the Count and Countess de la Marche, the Count D'Eu, the Duke de Penthièvre, and the Princess de Lamballe.

The princes d'Orleans, de Condé and de Conti, who were then in disfavour at court, were absent, and had received from his majesty a prohibition to be present. The cause of dispute was political, the Orleans party having raised the buckler in favour of the magistracy, whose disorganization the chancellor was projecting for the advantage of the crown.

These princes espoused the party of the long robe; in the first instance, for the sake of popularity, and in the second, for the sake of obtaining some good round sums of money, when the proper time for negotiating an adjustment should arrive. It has always cost the crown a consideration in money whenever the patriotism of the princes of the blood found itself called upon to protest against its errors. The public generally see nothing in these illustrious disputes but honourable motives, while, in fact, the whole resolves itself into a question of pounds, shillings and pence, between the cashiers of the two families.

I considered myself bound, after the example of Henri IV., to show my devotion to my wife on the day of my marriage: but the king would not hear of it, and I was not even permitted to pass the night at Fontainebleau where my wife was. The last celebration of this marriage, in two acts, took place at Versailles, on

the 14th of May. The princess arrived at ten in the morning, and shortly after, the Duchesses de Chartres and de Bourbon, and the Princess de Conti, were presented to her; their husbands, as I have said, were forbidden to appear. The two former assisted at the ceremony; but the latter requested permission to withdraw after her interview with the Countess de Provence: a request which the king the more willingly complied with, because he was aware of the uneasiness she suffered while she stayed.

On arriving in the royal chapel, my grandfather resorted to his prayer-book, surrounded by the royal family, while I led my wife to the foot of the altar, where we knelt on cushions in front of the rails of the communion table. The Cardinal de la Roche-Aimon, grand almoner of France, commenced the ceremony by bestowing his benediction on thirteen pieces of gold, and the wedding ring, which he presented to me.

I placed the ring on the finger of the Countess de Provence, and gave her the thirteen pieces of gold.

I pronounced the formidable "Yes," with so sonorous a voice as to surprise all the bystanders ; which occasioned the Count d'Artois to say to me after the ceremony, "Mal peste, brother, how you shouted out your response !"

"I could have wished," I replied, "to make my voice heard at Turin."

This reply, which was repeated to my wife, affected her much. At six in the evening the ceremony was succeeded by plays in the gallery ; and they were followed by a splendid banquet in the Salle de Spectacle. The king afterwards conducted the Countess de Provence to her chamber, and did me the distinguished honour of presenting me the *chemise*. The Dauphiness performed the same ceremony to her sister-in-law, and every one then retired : the next

day I received the customary congratulations: the Dauphin, alone, with misplaced sincerity, allowed himself to say, when I asked him how he liked the Countess de Provence, "Not much; I should feel no great anxiety to have her for my wife."

"I wish you joy, then," I briskly replied, "that your taste has been better suited in the choice of yours; for we are both of us satisfied with our lot."

Although not so pretty as the Dauphiness, the Countess de Provence was endowed with the most estimable qualities. I never had cause to offer her a single reproach. Her sole study was to please me—to adopt my friendships and my dislikes, without seeking to exert any influence over my tastes or opinions. I must confess that she had some reasons to complain of me sometimes; but she never did: and was not the less steady in fulfilling all the duties of a wife. I recollect, the very day after her mar-

riage she refused to put on rouge, according to court etiquette, and in the first instance firmly rejected all the persuasions which Madame de Valentinois employed to reconcile her with this indispensable to a courtly toilette. The latter, disconcerted at last with my wife's opposition, saw no other means of conquering the princess's repugnance than by calling me in to her assistance. Having told my wife that I intreated her to comply, and that I should consider her beauty improved by it, she instantly turned to her lady in waiting, and told her with a natural simplicity quite charming—"Come then, and put on the rouge; and as much as you please of it, since it will render me more agreeable to my husband."

I shall pass over the various fêtes which were given on this occasion, at Paris and Versailles. My wife and myself waited their termination with impatience; the *ennui* of perpetually performing a part already began to ex-

tend to us. I wished to return into the interior of the scene : I sighed for domestic enjoyments, and I was not slow in recognizing that while private individuals find difficulty in realizing their dreams of splendour, princes can do little more than regretfully dream of the happiness of a private station. The countess was also in a short time painfully undeceived ; and whatever illusions of happiness she may have cherished, were not long in disappearing. Her house became the theatre of quarrels, scandal, and intrigues, which perpetually disturbed its peace. These chiefly arose from the rivalry which grew up between the female attendants of the Dauphiness and the Countess, each relying on the superiority of influence, either present or to come, which they ascribed to their respective mistresses.

The Duchess de Brancas enjoyed the honour of her rank in peace, and that was all ; for little farther attention was paid to her. But this

was not the case with the Countess de Valentinois, on whom it was thought requisite to confer a double dose of respect, not only on account of her talents, but her friendship with Madame Du Barry. She delighted in court life and in intrigue, and cared more about money than honour ; I should certainly not have selected her for my wife's lady in waiting, if the king's will, or rather that of the favourite, had not imposed the appointment on me.

I am bound to admit that the Duchess de Valentinois showed her gratitude to Madame Du Barry as long as the latter occupied her high station ; but after her fall she appeared to be less anxious about her, without however abandoning her entirely. Meanwhile, the duchess every day brought us some amiable messages from her patroness: she assured us, on her behalf, that her most anxious desire was to preserve a good intelligence between us, and to do us service with the king whenever she had an opportunity. Desirous of putting this al-

leged good will of the countess to the proof, I made use of it whenever I had a favour to request of his majesty; and as it was always with success, I was induced to infer, that this great female sinner did not even make use of the ordinary holy water of courts.

Under these circumstances, I could not be expected to treat Madame Du Barry with disrespect. I, however, never granted to her any especial countenance; and contented myself with maintaining an impartial neutrality; but that did not avail me. The Dauphiness was informed that I was on the best terms with her: that princess, in consequence exhibited symptoms of pique towards me, as well as my wife; and shortly after, the Dauphin, in the presence of Marie-Antoinette and the Countess de Provence, asked me if I still wore the colours of the royal concubine; for it was by this title that he designated her in private, occasionally employing all the coarser synonymes of the term.

“No,” I replied; “the colours of France are

sufficiently handsome to preclude the wish of wearing any others."

"I am seriously afraid," replied the Dauphin, "that you are infatuated with the favourite."

"You err," I replied; "I respect in her the king's choice, and nothing more."

My brother in his rejoinder, having employed some bitter phrase, I thought it necessary to put an end to the conference by saying as coldly as possible, "Are you addressing yourself, monseigneur, to the prince or the brother?"

He saw his error, blushed, stammered something unintelligible, and quitted the apartment instantly. My wife was affected, and the Dauphiness, fearing the consequence of this scene, which she had occasioned, endeavoured to apologize for the impetuosity of her husband.

"I thought till now," replied the Countess de Provence, provoked by what had been said,

“that politeness constituted a part of the education of the French princes of the blood.”

This remark was near reviving the quarrel; but I interposed my mediation, and the matter ended there. I was in hopes that this jangling would have gone no farther; but the Countess de Provence went and related the whole to Madame de Valentinois; the latter hastened to regale the favourite with it, who in turn made bitter complaints to the king; not so much for the sake of gratifying any personal resentment, as in order to irritate him against the Dauphin.

The king was too much attached to domestic peace to risk its disturbance by openly blaming my brother and his wife. He already began to consider his tenure in no other light than the usufruct of the crown; and only aspired to its peaceable possession as long as he lived. He had already too many disputes with the magistracy, to wish to increase their amount by

family quarrels. He therefore enjoined silence on every body, and contented himself with intimating to my sister-in-law, through her lady of honour, the old Countess de Noailles, that he was sorry to see the division which reigned between her and Madame de Provence, and that he begged her to conduct herself differently for the future.

This only patched up the breach by halves. The Dauphiness, enraged to find herself blamed by the king, complained to her husband; but the latter dreading, in his turn, to excite the royal resentment, exerted himself to appease his wife, and sent his old preceptor to me to apologize for what he alleged was a momentary and involuntary ebullition. I accepted his apology with the respect which I felt due to the heir-apparent. I then hastened to embrace him; and there our quarrel terminated, to the great disappointment of numerous worthy gentlemen about court, who had built some advan-

tageous calculations on the prospect of our divisions. The next step was to reconcile the Dauphiness to the Countess de Provence. This was a less easy matter; however we at length succeeded; and this was, up to the period of the king's death, the darkest cloud which obscured the continuance of our reciprocal friendship.

My sister-in-law, in order to please her husband, assumed the appearance of the greatest sincerity in her reconciliation. I one day jokingly said to her, that for domestic comfort winter was much more agreeable than summer, and that nothing was a greater treat to me than a cosy chit-chat by the fire-side, with the feet on the fender. The following week I received a charming caricature, designed by Fragonard, in which Madame de Provence and myself were represented in our robes de chambre, cotton nightcaps on our heads, a *machon* on our laps, seated by the side of a good fire, in the exact

position I had described. I guessed whence the banter came, and we were highly amused with it. I have since, while traversing the snows of Courland, had occasion to recall my definition of the comforts of a domestic winter.

CHAPTER VI.

Observations of Louis XV.—The Count de Provence a partizan of the Magistrature—Louis XVIII. in 1814 refuses to re-establish the Parliaments—The old Parliamentarians entertain an aversion to the Count de Provence—Infamous Verses against the King—Adventures of a Mousquetaire in a Convent of Nuns—The scandalous results—The Prelates of the Court—The King's remarks—Prince Louis de Rohan at Vienna.

GAIIETY was at that period a rare quality at Versailles. The disgrace of the Choiseuls, the destruction of the parliaments, the triumph of the favourite, agitated all minds to a remarkable degree. The Duke de Choiseul, and the Duchess de Grammont, his sister, (for poor Praslin could scarcely be said to count for any thing,) had

contrived to erect themselves into a substantial state party, reinforced by that of the magistracy, which was an auxiliary not to be despised. This was the first time that all the court party was induced, in defiance of the penalty of exile, to go in a body and ask permission to pay a visit to the refractory party. This opposition exasperated the king ; he did not dare, however, to refuse the demand of the courtiers, and replied to the Duke d' Aiguillon, who urged him to reprimand them :

“ I have already too many enemies among those who, with God's blessing, are at court, without augmenting the number by those who call themselves my friends. If I were younger, I should perhaps be more displeased ; but at my age, tranquillity is the only thing needful.”

The king, however, had no idea that the destruction of parliaments was to be permanent, for he said on this subject to the chancellor, “ When I die I shall leave you a troublesome legacy.”

“ What is that, sire ? ”

“ The recall of the black gowns. My grandson will hope to make himself popular by recalling them ; and I fear they will wreak their resentment on you. Unhappily, whoever commits this political error will derive no advantage from it. He will have to struggle against new resistances, and new ambitions ; and it is seldom that a monarchy is able to resist those reiterated blows which gradually undermine its strength, and terminate by shaking it to its foundations.”

I was of the same opinion as my grandfather on this point, and at the accession of my brother, I exerted myself to the utmost, as I shall have to detail as I proceed, to induce him to leave the magistracy in the same condition as Louis XV. had established it ; a condition which was as much for the interest of the throne as that of the nation. My ideas on this head have never changed, and when, in 1814, I was solicited to restore the parliaments, I was most decided in

my refusal; and I replied to those who were importunate with me on the subject, "The greatest service which the revolution rendered to the monarchy was that of converting the haughty functions of the individuals of the ancient parliaments into those of individual judges."

I shall say the less on the subject of the parliament, as it is so well known. Let it suffice to say, that had it not been for the intrigues of Madame Du Barry, the Duke d'Aiguillon, and the Abbé Terray, which inflicted a mortal blow on it, this measure, had it been well managed, might have saved us from a revolution.

I was very frank with the king in expressing my opinion on this subject, which pleased him the more, as the studied silence of the Dauphin, with regard to it, troubled his mind. But his approbation was not sufficient to counterbalance the unpopularity which my opinion drew upon

me. A perfect hail-storm of puns, pasquinades, and epigrams, assailed me on every side. It is from this epoch that I must date the growth of that injustice on the part of the court and the nation towards me, and of that prejudice against me which never ceased augmenting till my return to France, when I flatter myself I at length succeeded in putting a stop to it by the tenor of my conduct.

I was not slow in perceiving also, and with painful presentiments, how continually the royal office was depreciated. The king had himself partly destroyed the illusion which causes it to be respected : abroad, the sovereigns of Europe scarcely considered him as a power to be reckoned in the political balance ; while at home, his ill-regulated love of pleasure had lost him, towards the conclusion of his reign, the esteem and love of his people. The following verses, which I am unable to quote at full length, too forcibly demonstrate the fatal truth.

Le mot royalement était jadis louange,
 Tout ce qu'on faisait bien était fait comme un roi :
 On disait, comme un Dieu, comme un roi, comme un
 ange ;

Mais aujourd'hui ce mot est d'un tout autre aloi.

Juger *royalement*, c'est dire n'y voit goutte.

Et n'écouter jamais qu'un gueux de chancelier ;

Juger *royalement*, c'est faire banqueroute ;

Vivre *royalement*, c'est être p

The *Gazetier Cuirassé*, an infamous pamphlet, published by the Sieur Morande, had also an extraordinary circulation, as well as the pretended correspondence between Soerhouette and the Chancellor Maupeou. Every thing which tended to degrade the king, his associates, and the depositories of his authority, was bought up with avidity. And, indeed, the evidence of every fact I can recollect, proves to me, that the Revolution really dates from this epoch. My youth at that time precluded me from seeing things, as I have seen them since ; but even at that time, I experienced a deep anxiety at the turn of public events, with-

out being able to fathom the whole extent of the evil.

Ennui reigned at Versailles; yet its empire was occasionally broken by narratives of adventures of gallantry and intrigues of all sorts, which were not without their amusing points of view.

I remember, among others, a ludicrous adventure of the Abbess of Bon-Secours, Madame Dussailant, which made a stir at that time. This worthy devotée, who was yet young and not insensible of admiration, cast a tender eye on a certain black mousquetaire, named Dubourg de la Porquerie, whom I have since employed in Languedoc as a royal commissioner. He was a tall well-built dunce, with broad shoulders, black and sparkling eyes, an aqueline nose, stupid enough in other respects—a regular debaucher of nuns, and a fellow who was never out of the parlours of the convents, which he converted into his lounging *salons*. Besides

the spouses of the Lord, the convent of Bon-Secours contained a crowd of damsels who had fled from the world or their husbands, and had retired to this sacred locality for the purpose of expiating offences they had not the grace to repent.

The black mousquetaire, went frequently to see two relatives of his who were among the secluded fair ones, and was always accompanied in these visits, by a friend who was in love with one of the self-mortifying saints. The abbess, in the due exertion of her zeal to see that things were conducted with propriety, often made her appearance at the grate, and seeing La Porquerie, she could not avoid doing justice to his personal merits; while the latter was not slow in taking advantage of her transitory weakness.

In a short time, the handsome mousquetaire obtained the run of the convent, and each of the fair recluses was anxious to show her complais-

ance to the new guest. Among the rest, were some parlour-boarders, and of these, one named Mademoiselle Mimi Bour——, was distinguished for her personal attractions. La Porquerie was not slow in perceiving them, obtained the love of the ingenuous fair one; he forgot the abbess, and hastened to give an account of his new passion to his relative Madame de G——. The latter, in order to induce him to favour her intrigue with his friend, as a return for her services to him, took upon herself to be the go-between of La Porquerie and Mademoiselle Mimi. Thenceforward, the young lambs ran the length of their pasture; mutual love was confessed; and it was resolved to brave any hazard for the purpose of seeing each other freely.

The two friends hired a house which was only separated from the convent by a party-wall; so that the two fair recluses, scaling this barrier by a rope ladder, went every night to have an interview with their lovers in the neigh-

bouring house. These clandestine visits had already been several times repeated, and the abbess, astonished at the sudden coldness of the mousquetaire, was endeavouring to account for the cause of it, when a pious tongue took upon itself to explain the enigma.

Additional information having convinced Madame Dussillant of the truth of this double perfidy, she resolved the following night to gratify her revenge by taking the criminals in the very act of offence. She first went to the chamber of the two relations of La Porquerie; one of the birds was already flown; the other grew confused; concluded by making a confession, and indicated the place where the lovers were enjoying their amorous *tête-à-tête*.

The abbess then assembled all the holy community; marched at their head into the garden, and caused her procession to range itself silently at the foot of the rope-ladder, which remained suspended to the boundary wall. They waited

a considerable length of time the expected return of Madame de G—— and Mademoiselle Mimi. At length the fair culprits made their appearance at the top of the wall. They began to descend; but what was their alarm, when they found themselves besieged by a triple circle of females, scandalized by the flagrant proof of their *escapade*. After a volley of reproaches, they were placed in confinement, and the virtuous abbess, in the plenitude of her authority and conscious rectitude, denounced the offence to the authorities.

This conventual anecdote caused a great deal of amusement at Versailles. The king laughed more heartily at it than any body; although the "Scandalous Chronicle" has pretended that Mademoiselle Mimi had been one of the fair sultanas of the *Parc au Cerfs*. However, his majesty thought it incumbent on him to make an example of poor M. la Porquerie, who was confined some time at Vincennes by a *lettre de*

cachet; but I obtained his release through the intervention of Madame Du Barry, who could not bring herself to be severe on offences which she naturally considered of a venial character.

It was about this time, towards the middle of the year, that the king appointed Prince Louis de Rohan ambassador to Vienna. If we may trust to the joy which his highness exhibited, he could have had no presentiment of what was to follow. He was far from foreseeing that it would be so fatal to him, and that it would for ever attract the hatred of the Dauphiness. This prince was as ambitious as he was prodigal; and notwithstanding his immense fortune, he found means to plunge into debt. It was his intrigues which gave occasion to the unfortunate affair of the diamond necklace, which I am enabled to explain in a more satisfactory manner than it has ever been done yet. My sister-in-law, I can take upon myself to say

was innocent in this affair; but the same cannot be said of the grand almoner of France.

Having no faith in the talents of Prince Louis de Rohan, I was surprised at the appointment; but as he was supported by the interest of Madame Du Barry and the Duke d'Aiguillon, it was natural that he should carry it against the Baron de Breteuil, who, having obtained subsequently this embassy, for which he canvassed at the same time as the prince, never forgave him his success. The baron was implacable in his hatred: and he too well exemplified this towards me during my emigration. The relations I have had with him do not constitute the least curious portion of my adventures.

CHAPTER VII.

The Count and Countess de Provence reside at the Chateau de la Muette—The Dauphiness makes advances to them—Anecdote of the fête given to the Countess by her lady in waiting—Little differences which result from it—The Duchess de Brancas shares the disgrace of the Count de Provence—The Marchioness de Mirepoix—She has a conference with the Count de Provence—The latter concedes to the wishes of the favourite, out of respect to the King.

THE physicians having prescribed change of air to the Countess de Provence after an attack of the small-pox, which was fortunately of a benignant character, we set out on the 11th of November for the Chateau de la Muette, where we resided till the middle of December. I only

absented myself occasionally, when any particular business required my presence at court.

The Countess de Provence received at Murette several visits from the Dauphiness. This augmentation of regard perplexed me, and I fancied that I soon discovered the cause in the bitterness which my wife suddenly began to express towards Madame Du Barry, against whom, to say the truth, she permitted herself to drop some censures of no very measured description. I could not help inferring that Marie-Antoinette, who could not endure the favourite, had endeavoured to excite a fellow feeling in this respect in the bosom of her sister-in-law.

While this was passing, the Countess de Valentinois, who had probably her motive, gave a fête to my wife, which she announced after the latter's convalescence. It took place on the 21st of November, in a charming mansion which our lady in waiting had at Passy. All the flower of the court was invited to this festi-

vity, which would have passed off *à merveille*, had it not been for the occurrence of an unexpected event.

Before Madame de Valentinois sent her cards of invitation, a report had been spread that Madame Du Barry was ill with a severe cold. Bordeu, her physician, had prohibited her from quitting her apartment for at least a fortnight; in fact, she had not gone out up to the moment of the fête in question: the Dauphiness and the Countess de Provence therefore engaged to be present, being well persuaded that their enemy would be away. The latter's secret understanding was well kept, and we arrived at Passy on the day appointed, without the least suspicion that any thing was premeditated.

The Dauphiness and the Countess de Provence were surrounded with a numerous court, where the partisans of the Choiseuls predominated. I already heard those words repeated, which so often from my infancy had found an

echo in my hopes, "Here we are at length, in comfort and good understanding." But on a sudden there was a general whispering; all eyes were directed towards the entrance door; a friend of the family advanced with a troubled air to whisper something to Madame de Valentino; the latter rose, and assuming an air of surprise and dissatisfaction, cast a supplicating look on the princesses, and then hastened to receive Madame Du Barry, who made her appearance in all the exultation of dress and beauty. Her countenance, exhibiting no traces of illness, had no expression but a malicious smile, which indicated internal satisfaction at the triumph she expected from this *coup de théâtre*.

The Dauphiness bit her lip with mortification, and half rose, as if for the purpose of withdrawing; but a word dropped by Madame de Noailles caused her to re-seat herself, where, still in a state of indecision, she received the salutations of the sparkling and elated favourite.

The embarrassment of my wife equalled that of Marie-Antoinette; but as she had the good sense to consult my look, I had an opportunity of inducing her, by a significant glance and gesture, to do nothing which might displease the king; for I guessed that he was implicated in the plot, inasmuch as Madame Du Barry had affected to repeat the evening before, in his majesty's presence, that she should not come to Madame de Valentino's fête. However, I could not refrain from whispering the favourite at a moment when I thought myself unnoticed.

"Ah, madame! I hear it murmured that your presence here afflicts certain individuals; but it is not the most haughty who is most dissatisfied by it; it is the most charming."

She smiled, and I retired hastily, to prevent her making any reply. Immediately after, the chancellor, the Abbé Terrai, and the Duke d'Aiguillon, approached the countess, for she also had her court. "*Rose et Colas*" were

performed in the evening; Clairval and Caroline acquitted themselves *à merveille*. There was afterwards represented a complimentary piece in favour of the Dauphiness and the Countess de Provence, in which the concocters had the impertinence to introduce the favourite, to the great scandal of the assembly. Favart and the Abbé de Voisenon were the authors of this piece, which was ill received; there was one couplet especially which excited all the indignation of the Choiseuls and the parliamentary coterie, who constituted a majority on the occasion.

Malgré Discorde et ses noirs émissaires,
De la justice ardera le flambeau,
A la Chicane on rognera les serres,
Et Thémis sera sans landeau.

These verses were all but hissed, notwithstanding the excuses of the chancellor; the Abbé de Voisenon was disconcerted by the general hubbub, and ineffectually endeavoured

to justify himself: Dining with d'Alembert the next day, he pretended that the unfortunate couplet was Favart's, and complained that latterly nothing but the absurdities of others had been lent to him."

"But it is only the affluent to whom such loans are made," replied d'Alembert, without much concern for the worthy bishop of Montrouge; as Voltaire, among other nicknames, called the Abbé.

The Dauphiness and the Countess de Provence, whose irritation against Madame de Valentinois was at its height, owed her a grudge long after this, and the latter having asked the countess, before her departure, how she liked the fête given in honour of her, replied,—
"The fête was very pleasant, most assuredly, and I am obliged to you for your kind association of me with it; but I cannot help thinking that Madame Du Barry and the chancellor ought to be more pre-eminently grateful."

This remark, coldly delivered, confused Madame de Valentinois. I was vexed at this, for I knew all the risks of declaring war against the favourite. I therefore lost no time in parrying the effect of this frank declaration, and squeezing the hand of our lady in waiting, I assured her that no fête could have been more agreeable to us than this, and that we should be anxious to show our gratitude in every possible way.

But an apology does not always efface an affront; sometimes it discloses their vantage ground to those who receive it; and this was the case with Madame de Valentinois, who justly perceived that she should gain more by making complaints than by testifying satisfaction. She accordingly assumed the part of martyr in the favourite's cause, made great complaints of my wife, bitterly lamented her own misfortune, and, in short, played her part so well, that Madame Du Barry was soon aware that she would have neither peace nor truce till she had given

her a reward for her martyrdom—first, by an addition to her pension of fifteen thousand *livres*, and next by giving her the place of *dame d'honneur* to my wife, a still more signal favour!

The following was the cause of the latter pretension:—I perceived for some time past that the Duchess de Brancas was seeking secret occasion to depreciate me in the eyes of the Countess de Provence, and that our domestic good understanding was often disturbed, although I could not detect the actual cause. I observed—I made inquiries—and at length learnt that our *dame d'honneur* was fully aware of the political axiom, "*divide and govern*," and that her object was to reduce it to practice in our establishment. On this discovery, I lost no time in taking measures for getting rid of this troublesome woman, and hastened to make a frank disclosure of my feelings to the king.

The king heard me in silence, and then re-

plied by general remarks, which convinced me that he wished to reflect and ask advice before he made up his mind. Two days after, the Maréchale de Mirepoix, meeting me at the house of the Dauphiness, took a favourable occasion to intimate that she had a favour to ask of me, and would be obliged by my granting her an interview of a quarter of an hour on the subject next day. I neither could nor would say nay. The Maréchale de Mirepoix was an authority at the court of my grandfather. She was born in 1707, came early to court, and established her influence on a permanent basis by her suavity of character, easiness of access, and especially by the ascendancy she obtained over the king's mistresses, to whom she had the address to render herself in some sort indispensable. It was, in fine, difficult to decide whether the marchioness was most necessary to the mistresses, or the mistresses to the king. It seemed agreed that she should pass from one mistress to another when any

change took place ; and on the successive deaths of Mesdames de Châteauroux and Pompadour, she fell to the lot of the Countess du Barry, who being seized with a *belle passion* for her, could never after be induced to do without her.

Madame de Mirépoix had all her life a single object—that of obtaining the king's money, in order to dissipate it in expensive and ruinous caprices. In order to effect this laudable object she attached herself to my grandfather like his shadow, humoured his royal whims and his bad humours, sure beforehand of making him pay her dearly for them. In the meanwhile, she suffered intrigues to go on round her, without meddling with them, and did service to her friends under the assumed appearance of attachment to their persons and not to their cause, so as to avoid being compromised. It was said that, never having been a regular beauty, she had originally possessed a good figure and a fresh complexion, which having been taken care

of in her mature age, constituted altogether a rather prepossessing old lady. Encomiums were made on her wit, as younger than her person; and on her gaiety, which is a characteristic trait of those fair confidantes, who are indispensable to ladies in the critical condition of the favourite; and finally, on her suavity of manner, which was the more remarkable, as at the bottom she loved nobody but herself, though she had the talent of always making herself agreeable to others, and never tiring them with her company. Accordingly, the king was always prompted to resort to the consolation of her society whenever a cloud darkened his brow, or when he stood in need of some channel for getting rid of his ill humour in reproaches.

I knew too well the king's friendship to repulse the marchioness; on the contrary, I made a point of encouraging her advances. I assumed an air of being pleased with her conversation, and we were on the best terms. I ac-

cordingly did not fail to be at the rendezvous the next day. She began the conference by saying that she was desirous of obtaining a situation in my establishment for some subaltern; but passing quickly to a more important theme—"It would seem, monseigneur," said she, "that you would not be sorry to get rid of a certain old lady, who has an inclination to spoil the harmony of your establishment. The king has told me all, so you need make no secret of the affair to me."

I instantly understood the purport of the Maréchale's conference; and I felt no doubt that *she* was employed in her mission by my grandfather. I therefore unhesitatingly replied, that I should be happy if his majesty would permit me to discharge the Duchess de Brancas.

"The king is quite disposed, monseigneur, to accede to your wishes," she replied; "but he has promised the reversion of the office to a lady for whom he has a regard, and he cannot

discharge the one, without substituting the other in her place. My respectful regard for you has alone induced me to communicate this secret; for I am not charged with any especial mission on the subject."

Fearful for an instant that Madame Du Barry was the person intimated, to whom I would even have preferred the duchess, I replied that my respect for his majesty would stop at nothing that was not impossible.

She understood my meaning readily, and instantly replied, "His majesty's protégée is already in your house, and occupies a distinguished post in it."

"You mean the Countess de Valentinois?"

"The same; and you owe her some little equivalent for some severe remarks, by which she has felt herself considerably hurt."

I was quite indifferent whether this lady occupied one place in my establishment or another. However, I thought I was bound to turn

my compliance to account, and I made it a condition that her employ should be given to the Duchess de Saint-Mégrin; for I was anxious that a lady of the same rank should be about the Countess de Provence. The Maréchale assured me that there would be no obstacle to my wish; and returned to the Countess Du Barry, well satisfied with the success of her embassy. My most difficult task was to reconcile my wife to the arrangement, for she was at that time in habits of the greatest intimacy with the Dauphiness; but I finally succeeded.

The king sent for me the next day. "I have reflected," said he, "on your request; and I assent to it, provided the person you wish to propose to fill the vacant place be agreeable to me."

There is nothing like a pre-concerted understanding to avoid disputes: I recommended Madame de Valentinois to the king for the office of *dame d'honneur*, and the Duchess de St.

Mégrin for that of lady in waiting. His majesty was pleased to sanction the double appointment, and there was nothing further to do than to give her dismissal to the Duchess de Brancas ; the latter did all she could to resist the change, and might have disputed the victory, but the king cut the matter short, and she found herself compelled to give way. Her dismissal, however, increased the Dauphiness's ill-will towards me.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Cardinal De Roche-Aymon—Death of the Duke de Vauguyon—Intrigues by which the Count d'Artois is made general of the Swiss guards—Interference of the Dauphiness—The King fears the Dauphin—What he said of him—Curious disclosure—Return of the Prince de Condé and the Duke de Bourbon to Court—Their ill reception by the Dauphin—The Count de Provence's sarcasm on them—Presentiment of approaching political disasters—Count de Lauraguais.

I SHALL pass over as briefly as possible the year 1772, which recalls few important occurrences to my recollection.

I may, however, refer to two events which recur to my memory. The first was the appointment of M. de la Roche-Aymon, arch-

bishop of Rheims and grand almoner of France, to the post of cardinal. He was not a learned doctor of the church, although in another sense he may be said to have been a good apostle. He was deficient in learning, but proficient in knowledge of the world ; which, at all events, is equally valuable. There never was a man so ingenious in lowering his pretensions in the sight of others, in order that he might give offence to nobody. He was equally polite to masters and their valets ; and especially assiduous to all the members of the royal family. He had been seen on his knees to the Marchioness de Pompadour ; and if he could have found a humbler position still, he would have taken it to Madame Du Barry. This was a certain way to succeed in life ; and accordingly he made a rapid progress. The king conferred the red hat on him with his own hand. The ceremony, which was performed with unusual pomp, lasted the whole day ; but the new cardinal never forgetting,

amidst his promotion, his characteristically grateful demeanour to his creators, hurried the same evening to offer his homage to the favourite, to whom he professed that he was indebted for every thing: a zeal which did not a little amuse us. The Dauphiness, however, soon heard of this, and exhibited her distaste to the cardinal; but his eminence found means to regain her good wishes, and obtained her absolution for the trespass.

The second event worthy of record was the death of the Duke de Vauguyon, our governor. He may be said to have been endowed with as many virtues as can be reasonably expected in a courtier; and his life was irreproachable, except as regarded the assiduity of his respect to Madame Du Barry. It is certain, that when reproached by the Prince de Beauvau for his visits to the favourite, he replied, "There will soon be no place for me amid the increasing crowds whom I have preceded in this parti-

cular; but the difference is, that I have been actuated by friendship for his majesty in my conduct, while others have been prompted by their natural business alone."

Shortly after the duke's death, the Count d'Artois was invested with the title of colonel-general of the Swiss guards, to the great mortification of the Duke d'Aiguillon, who had deprived M. de Choiseul of the office, in order to secure it for himself. The Dauphiness, who bore very impatiently the disgrace of the minister, to whom she owed her marriage, was resolved, if she could prevent it, should the employ be taken from him, that the Duke d'Aiguillon, his rival and successor, should not obtain the advantage of it. She accordingly threw her eyes on another candidate, and prepared her batteries conformably.

Marie-Antoinette, to whom it is impossible to deny the most engaging qualities, already began to exercise that ascendancy over the Count

d'Artois, which she long preserved, and which always appeared to me so fatal to our family. She availed herself of it on this occasion, to induce him to request the office in question of the king, whose favourite he was. This young prince, from his childhood, had pretensions to a chivalrous character; and his affectations found the more favour, since the king had been persuaded that he was the picture of himself. One day he laid a wager with the Dauphin, that he would enter our royal grandfather's apartment with his hat on, contrary to all etiquette; he accordingly assumed a martial air, affected the step of a marching general, and in fact did enter the room with his hat on his head. "My dear papa," said he to Louis XV., "is not this a truly martial air? I have been told that I resemble you." My grandfather began to laugh, and the Count d'Artois exclaimed, "I've won." This *espèglerie* was quite successful, and for some days nothing was talked of

at court but the wit of the young Count d'Artois.

The moment was well chosen for the success of the Dauphiness's project. The favourite and the Duke d'Aiguillon had not chosen to awaken the king's mistrust, by proposing beforehand a substitute for the Duke de Choiseul, feeling confident that they should be able to obtain the post as soon as his dismissal was formally communicated to him. The Count d'Artois, in consequence, found no rival, and the king was the more ready to grant him what he requested, since the grant disembarrassed him of a crowd of solicitors, who were besieging his repose on all sides.

Great, therefore, was the mystification of Madame Du Barry and the Duke d'Aiguillon, when the king met with a positive refusal their request of the office, of which the last already considered himself in possession. "It is proper," said his majesty, "that my grandson

my compliance to account, and I made it a condition that her employ should be given to the Duchess de Saint-Mégrin; for I was anxious that a lady of the same rank should be about the Countess de Provence. The Maréchale assured me that there would be no obstacle to my wish; and returned to the Countess Du Barry, well satisfied with the success of her embassy. My most difficult task was to reconcile my wife to the arrangement, for she was at that time in habits of the greatest intimacy with the Dauphiness; but I finally succeeded.

The king sent for me the next day. "I have reflected," said he, "on your request; and I assent to it, provided the person you wish to propose to fill the vacant place be agreeable to me."

There is nothing like a pre-concerted understanding to avoid disputes: I recommended Madame de Valentinois to the king for the office of *dame d'honneur*, and the Duchess de St.

discharge the one, without substituting the other in her place. My respectful regard for you has alone induced me to communicate this secret; for I am not charged with any especial mission on the subject."

Fearful for an instant that Madame Du Barry was the person intimated, to whom I would even have preferred the duchess, I replied that my respect for his majesty would stop at nothing that was not impossible.

She understood my meaning readily, and instantly replied, "His majesty's protégée is already in your house, and occupies a distinguished post in it."

"You mean the Countess de Valentinois?"

"The same; and you owe her some little equivalent for some severe remarks, by which she has felt herself considerably hurt."

I was quite indifferent whether this lady occupied one place in my establishment or another. However, I thought I was bound to turn

my compliance to account, and I made it a condition that her employ should be given to the Duchess de Saint-Mégrin; for I was anxious that a lady of the same rank should be about the Countess de Provence. The Maréchale assured me that there would be no obstacle to my wish; and returned to the Countess Du Barry, well satisfied with the success of her embassy. My most difficult task was to reconcile my wife to the arrangement, for she was at that time in habits of the greatest intimacy with the Dauphiness; but I finally succeeded.

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conduct was regulated by this impression during one or two weeks, and they were observed to exhibit more docility; but they soon resumed their habitual line of conduct.

The king was somewhat repaid this year for these disagreeables, by his reconciliation with the *Prince de Condé*, and his son, the Duke de Bourbon. The former, sick of exhibiting the sullens at the expense of his purse, for his salary was no longer paid, yielded to the intreaties of the Princess de Monaco, who was all powerful with him, and consented to beg pardon of the king, on condition that his arrears should be paid up, and that some additions should be made to the amount he had hitherto received. It is rare indeed that a reconciliation of a prince of the blood with the monarch does not cost the treasury dear.

On their re-appearance at Versailles on the 7th of December 1772, the two princes, after first paying their respects to the king, waited on the

Dauphin, who said to them, "Ah! there you are at last, gentlemen. I take it for granted that you have not come here in order to go away empty handed."

The pair then made me a visit, still smarting as they were under the sarcastic compliment of the Dauphin. My different reception made them a little amends.

"Gentlemen," said I, "during your absence you have acquired a new cousin, who will be delighted to be introduced, notwithstanding the little anxiety you have shown to pay her your respects."

The Duke de Bourbon, assuming a haughty air, was on the point of making me a sharp reply; but his father prevented him, by saying, "that under the circumstances of the case, his conscience had imposed silence on his heart."

"It would seem, my cousin," I replied, with an air of good-humour, "that there are reconciliations with conscience, since your conduct to day proves it."

The public, with whom the chancellor was unpopular, saw the proceedings of the Prince de Condé with a dissatisfied eye. He was in consequence assailed with songs, epigrams, and pamphlets, in which Madame de Monaco, the chancellor, and the favourite, were not forgotten. It was easy to foresee, from the manner in which the royal family were attacked, that the time would soon arrive, when the assailants would no longer content themselves with the weapons of sarcasm, and that a physical effort to subvert it, foot to foot, would soon be made. It might have been said with Horace—

Prudens futuri temporis existum
Caliginosa nocte primit densi
Ridesque, si mortalis ultrò
Fas trepidat.

“ Providence has wisely enveloped the future in thick clouds, and laughs at the powerless efforts of the finite mortal who seeks to penetrate the veil.”

It is too certain, that the monarchy was on the edge of a precipice towards the end of my grandfather's reign; and in order to save it, more energetic hands than those of Louis XVI. were necessary. I flatter myself that at my own accession, I at least showed that I had derived profit from misfortune. It remains for others to consolidate my work, of which I may say with Horace—

“Exegi

. . . . Monumentum.”

The usual royal visits to Compiègne and Fontainebleau took place this year according to custom. On our return from the last, we found the Count de Lauraguais arrived from England, whither he had been driven by the dissatisfaction of the king. This unhappy gentleman, who was invested with the reputation of being a wit, made no other use of it than to multiply follies, and to disgrace himself in public estima-

tion. When in 1814 he became convinced that he could make no sensation as a philosopher, he attempted to attain his end by making a rout about the feudalism of the peerage; but this means of notoriety having failed like the foregoing, he died shortly after, exasperated to find that nobody troubled themselves about him, notwithstanding all his industrious exertions to bring himself into public notice.

CHAPTER IX.

The Duke d'Orleans, gained over by Madame de Montesson, re-appears at Court—The favourite wishes to be made Queen—Letter of the refractory Princes—The Count de Provence's remark on it—Animated scene between the Duchess de Bourbon and the Princess d'Henin—Consequences of this scandal—A mistress trucked for a Bank Note—Dialogue between two *Roués* of that period—What the Count de Provence expects from posterity—MM. de Caumont and de Noailles—The Marchioness de Talaru—The King and the Dauphiness—The latter's wish to marry the Count d'Artois after her own fashion—Joy of the Count and Countess de Provence that he is married according to theirs—Reflexions.

THE malcontent princes began about the beginning of the year 1773, to grow tired of their opposition, and returned to court one after the

other. The Duke d'Orleans also gave way in turn, at the instigation of Madame de Montesson, who, not content with the title of his mistress, wished, by the grace of the king, to become his wife. She was in hopes that if the marriage could once be effected, there would be little delay in making it public, especially if there should be any family.

The favourite accordingly made use of this lady to bring back the king to the Duke d'Orleans. There were conferences, interviews, and overtures regularly drawn up and subscribed on both sides. Madame Du Barry had a secret interest to gratify in bringing about an ill-assorted marriage of one of the princes of the blood; her object was to multiply what the English call precedents, and prepare the king for another public tie unworthy of the majesty of the throne; for I know that at that time; the Dukes de Richelieu and d'Aiguillon, and two or three others of in-

ferior rank, had conceived the ridiculous project of marrying the favourite to my grandfather. Communications had already been opened with the court of Rome, in order to annul the lady's first marriage. I have the fact from the Cardinal de Bernis, who assured me, that he spared no exertions to counteract the success of this intrigue.

The Duke d'Orleans being thus won over by Madame de Montesson, who acted in concurrence with the favourite's plan, the Duke de Chartres who had as yet no influence in the state, was easily induced to follow. At an early period, he aspired to the reputation (easily acquired by a prince) of being a professed rake; and having no other ambition at this time, his whole attention was devoted to his pleasures. I have seldom seen a prince sunk so low in public estimation, raise himself so high as he did in that estimation, at a subsequent period.

The princes D'Orleans wrote to the king at this juncture, a letter very different from what was supposed at that time. I had the contents of it from themselves, and I insert it here in order to rectify this fallacious opinion.

“ Notre profonde douleur, d'avoir encouru la disgrâce de Votre Majesté, en soutenant ce que nous pensions être les véritables droits du trône, nous amène aujourd'hui à vos pieds pour vous prier d'oublier notre faute en faveur de nos intentions. Nous savons que le premier devoir des princes de notre famille est une obéissance aveugle à vos volontés ; fâchés de nous en être écartés, nous y revenons avec autant de plaisir que de sincérité, demandant à votre majesté d'oublier le passé, et de nous admettre, dorénavant, dans ses bonnes grâces, que nous nous efforcerons toujours de mériter de plus en plus.

“ Nous sommes, sire, avec un profond respect, etc.”

This was certainly humbling the head too much, after having carried it so high. But I was advised not to make my opinion on this proceeding too public, since it gave pleasure to the king. His facility in conjuring up phantoms at the smallest opposition was extreme; and that of the princes of the blood troubled him greatly, while their hostility lasted. He therefore received the submission of the Duke D'Orleans very graciously, and reserved his resentment for the Prince de Conti, who seemed resolved to die in his protracted impotence. The latter had indeed a heart of iron, on which nothing seemed to make any impression.

During the carnival this year, we had for one of our diversions the recital of a strange scene, got up by the Princess d'Hemin, for

the use of the Duchess de Bourbon. This scene served as a prelude to another not less disagreeable, which the Count d'Artois kept in reserve for her. It must be stated in the first place, that the Chevalier de Coigny, who passed for a man *a bonnes fortunes* at court, was in fact so high in favour with the ladies, that overwhelmed with their good graces, he found himself compelled to participate the secret with his friends. About the beginning of this year, a certain Dame de Martinville, wife of a farmer general, shared the heart of the chevalier with the Princess d'Henin. The latter, whose jealous and haughty spirit could not accommodate itself to such a participation, was seeking some method of triumphing over her rival, when the chevalier on a sudden ceased his attentions without assigning any motive for his conduct. The angry princess immediately put all her secret agents in motion, and learnt that the Dame Martinville had also been de-

serted ; but in favour of whom ? that was the question ; and it was not long in being revealed, for a whispered rumour ran through all Paris, that a lady of the highest rank—in short, the Duchess de Bourbon—had a particular regard for the Chevalier de Coigny, and that she appreciated his merits in a very conspicuous manner.

The princess was in doubt at first, but afterwards resolved to assure herself of the fact. She bribed one of the chevalier's footmen, and obtained the proof which removed her doubt. An intercepted billet of the duchess fell into her hands. It was addressed to the faithless chevalier ; for whom the writer made an assignation couched in unequivocal terms for the next masked ball at the opera. It was for the Lundi Gras, on the 22nd of February, 1773. Madame d'Henin, with the sagacity of jealous resentment, contrived to learn the secret mark which the duchess was to place on her domino, in

order to be recognized by her lover ; she, on her side, took care to disguise herself, and being well-assured of not being counteracted by the presence of the chevalier, since he had not received the billet, she hastened to put her plan of revenge in operation. On arriving in the *salle* of the opera, the princess perceived her rival, accosted her, feigned to take her for Madame de Martinville, and immediately proceeded to business. I can relate her words almost to the letter ; for she repeated them half an hour after to the Marchioness de Montesquiou, who amused me, in her turn, with their repetition, and I can undertake to say, that no one ever enjoyed a heartier laugh.

“ I am glad to meet you, my darling,” said she to the Duchess de Bourbon ; “ for I wanted to wish you joy and condole with you at the same time. What ! the Chevalier de Coigny sacrifice the Princess d’Henin to you ! Upon my word, it is a triumph ; and you are worthy

of it, for you are a charming creature. Yet how is it possible to believe, that this *cognoscente* in beauty should desert you for a woman, who is doubtless your superior in rank and accomplishments; yet whose personal attractions are so much beneath yours?"

The princess then remorselessly ran over a catalogue of all the personal defects of the duchess; which took such effect, that the latter, mortified to the quick in her self-love, made an effort to terminate the unpleasant subject by assuring her rival, that she was not Madame de Martainville, and that she felt no wish to prolong the conversation.

The princess however persisted; declared that she was perfectly certain of what she had stated, and notwithstanding the haughty and almost menacing disclaimers of her victim, continued to probe the wound, and to lacerate it in every way ingenuity could devise: then aban-

doning herself to all the irritating impulses of her passion, she added, "You may contradict as much as you please, my pretty mask ; *women of our stamp* are always known to each other."

This phrase was employed in all its synonyms, and as the princess spoke in a very loud key, the sound of her voice brought a crowd of persons round the two ladies. Fortunately for the duchess, at this critical juncture Madame de la Vauguyon came up to relieve her, and conducted her back to her hotel more dead than alive, and burning with desire to be avenged for an affront, of which she did not know the author. It was no longer a secret the next day, for the princess glorying in the gratification of her resentment, kept no more restraint on her tongue. The king was one of the first to hear of it ; and his first determination was to wreak an ample measure of severity on the offender ; but his fair Mentor, whom he con-

sulted, recommended him to hush up the affair for fear of giving a handle to public censure, which it was better to avoid. But the Prince de Condé had it intimated to the Princess d'Henin, that if she ever dared to show herself in the presence of the Duchess de Bourbon, he would throw her out of the window. The lady, greatly scandalized by this threat, complained to the king about it, through the medium of one of her relations.

"I recommend Madame d'Henin," replied his majesty, "to give the Prince de Condé no opportunity to put his threat into operation; for after so perilous a leap through the window, I should tremble for her ability to ascend the great staircase of Versailles in order to demand satisfaction."

The princess took the hint, and kept herself in the back ground for some time after.

I have related this adventure, because it furnishes a livelier picture of the manners of the

times, than all the dissertations of philosophers. I may now relate another.

I have remarked that the Chevalier de Coigny was sometimes so embarrassed with his numerous successes among the fair sex, as to turn them over to his friends; and he was not less prodigal of his money than his mistresses. It is even said, that previous to obtaining the friendship of my sister-in-law, he often found himself at a loss to meet his expenses.

The Count de Modène met him one fine morning in the Tuileries, twisting two papers between his fingers, with the aspect of a person out of humour. They approached and saluted each other; but the chevalier still appeared disturbed.

“What’s the matter, my friend,” said the count, “these bits of torn paper seem to trouble you very much.”

“I wish the devil had them,” replied de Coigny; “one is a *billet-doux*, the other a

tradesman's account ; and I cannot give a satisfactory answer to either."

" I understand you are as usual ; an empty purse on one side, and more possessions than you know what to do with on the other."

" Exactly—the fair one, however, is a perfect angel ; but the cursed account ! It is indispensable to pay it out of hand, and I have not a single *écu* towards it."

" Why don't you pawn your ancient plate ?"

" Plate, jewels, diamonds, have all vanished ; and I am now in actual want of two hundred louis."

" Well ! my dear fellow, I see but one resource for you ; and that is to turn your mistress to account."

" Why, there's something in that. Stay, Modène ; if you have got any cash to spare, I will undertake to procure you a divine creature."

" Indeed ! faith, if she is worth while, you may have already found a buyer."

" Ah ! my friend, you are, indeed, a lucky mortal. I cede her to you for a mere song—a thousand *écus*, and she may be fairly said to be worth three thousand."

" Very well ; I should like to accept your offer, if it be only for the whim of the thing ; but are you not crying up too much the value of the goods ?"

" No, 'pon honor ; she is the wife of a conseiller de parlement, lovely as a houri, only twenty ; a susceptible heart—brilliant vivacity—she is a perfect little devil. Such a favour as this is worth a trifle."

" Bien ! the bargain is concluded. But how are are you to transfer her to me ?"

" Don't trouble yourself about that ; that's my affair. All you have to do is to pay me the three thousand *livres*."

" You may consider them at your house already. I take on myself the responsibility of relieving you from the anxiety of your debt."

The chevalier gave the count the portrait, the hair, and the letters of Madame de H——. It was agreed that the count should profess to have got them from an opera dancer, to whom the chevalier had perfidiously presented them. He was then to restore them to the fair one—a sentimental action, which, while it excited her gratitude, would naturally have an effect on her heart. In short, affairs turned out just as they had been projected, and our gentleman of honour at court had the additional satisfaction of paying off his debt of a thousand crowns with two thousand francs down; for the tradesman, delighted to save two-thirds of a sum he thought very doubtful out of the fire, let him off for the remainder. It will appear, therefore, that courtiers can be sometimes men of business. Indeed, as the two friends made no mystery of the transaction, this narrative of a bargain, so frankly made, and so faithfully executed, furnished no slight subject of amusement at Versailles.

I lost one of my first waiting gentlemen at the commencement of the year—the Marquis de Caumont. He was a worthy man, with very little talent, but very good company ; and he had a great attachment to me, which I appreciated the more, because attachment was a rare commodity at Versailles. His successor was the Marquis de Noailles, who had been French ambassador to Holland ; like a real Noailles at heart, he made amends for his want of talent by address ; never was a servant more devoted to his own interest ; in order, therefore, to be well served, it was necessary for me to convince him that he would gain by his good conduct. To distinguish and turn to profit the faults of others is a prince's talent—a science in which more profit can be sometimes derived from a bad quality in an agent than a good. He was very willing to worm himself into my confidence, and to renounce foreign diplomacy for the purpose of creating one more lucrative, at home,

in my private cabinet ; but I stood so completely on the defensive, that he could not accomplish his aim. In the following month of February, the Marchioness de Phalaris renounced her function of *Dame pour accompagner*, in consequence of some domestic arrangements. My friends at court were polite enough this time to allow me to choose my own substitute, and I selected the Countess de Damas. I suffered no loss by the change. The Marchioness de Phalaris, though endowed with many estimable qualities, was very much given to gossip ; no tit-bit of scandal was lost in her vicinity ; she was besides seized with a rage for relating to my wife any little gallantry I might show to the young ladies at the chateau ; and she would probably have succeeded in rendering her jealous of me, if she had remained much longer about her person.

The king had for some time delayed the marriage of the Count d'Artois with the younger

sister of the Countess de Provence ; this choice, which was very agreeable to me, was less so to the Dauphiness ; she would have preferred a German sister-in-law ; and some intrigues were set in motion to change the king's determination in this particular, but without success. Louis XV. who was rather prepossessed in favour of the House of Piedmont, stood in fear of that of Lorraine. He was already aware, through the medium of the Prince de Rohan, that the Dauphiness carried on a very secret correspondence with her mother, and took great umbrage at the circumstance.

The Countess de Provence was delighted with the anticipation of having a beloved sister near her ; and our satisfaction was augmented by knowing that my sister Clotilde would take her place at Turin, by marrying the Prince de Piedmont. The alliance between the two families was thus on the point of being reinforced by a double marriage. I was not

aware then, of what I have since been convinced that it is bad policy to restrict such connections within a narrow circle of relationship. By so doing, the physical degeneracy of particular races is effected, which require revivifying by an apposite infusion of new blood. Unhappily, I could cite too many examples of this degeneracy from the royal houses of Spain, Portugal, Naples, and Savoy.

CHAPTER X.

Some historic events—The Prince de Lambesc—The Count d'Artois has less learning than Count Sinety—Guignon, King of the Violins in France, dethroned—His ill humour and prophecy—Entry into Paris of the Dauphin and Dauphiness—First amours of the Count d'Artois—The Fair Peasant and the Pedagogue—Entry into Paris of the Count and Countess de Provence—The former exerts himself to please the nation.

MY brother's marriage was retarded till the end of the year, by the death of the king of Sardinia, my wife's grandfather. This monarch, who, besides being a statesman, united great qualities to a sincere piety, terminated his career on the 20th of February this year. The Countess de Provence shed many tears at his

loss. I tried all I could to imitate her example ; but I must confess I could not strain a single tear for this worthy grandpapa, who was quite a stranger to me. However I got something by my good intentions, and I passed during the whole period of the court mourning for a very susceptible soul, in the eyes of those who are not in the habit of looking very deeply beneath the surface.

At this epoch the king conferred the post of Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Dragoons on the Prince de Lambesc, the grand écuyer, in the room of the Prince de Bauffremont, who was any thing but a warrior, and who resigned. A worse choice could not have been made. This nobleman was a *fanfaron*, a braggadocio by profession, whose personal courage was more than doubtful. The events of the 14th of July 1789, are ascribed to him—events which he might have prevented if he had shown more prudence or more courage. His defeat after

his rash assault on Font-Tournant, inspired the Parisians with that audacity which afterwards prompted them to storm the Bastille; and that first defeat decided the fate of the monarchy.

But at the epoch I refer to, it was thought that enough could not be done to exalt the house of Lorraine, although it was then in its zenith by the credit of its alliance with the Dauphin. It was this ill-fated predilection which was the primary cause of all our misfortunes.

In my capacity of first Canon of the Royal Chapter of St. Pierre, I caused a funeral service to be performed in the Sainte Chapelle du Mans, and felt half inclined to take my canon's place in the choir; for I was tolerably versed at that time in canon law; but on consideration, I thought it more prudent to content myself with the possession of my knowledge, and keep the display of it in the back ground.

As to the Count d'Artois, whose marriage

was now at hand, there was no necessity for him to have recourse to a real or artificial modesty in order to conceal his erudition, for he had scarcely a knowledge of the rudiments of history and ancient or modern literature. The collection and publication of the classics under his auspices, struck me, therefore, as an excellent piece of mystification on the public. The fact is, that this publication was a mere affair of pounds, shillings, and pence, projected by Radix de Sainte-Foix, his treasurer ; who, in order to conceal a portion of his embezzlements, sought this pretext for the employment of the funds which he converted to his own use. *

The Count de Sinety, one of our *sous-gouverneurs*, died the 29th March this year at Versailles. My grief for his loss was not extravagant. We were not much in his debt on the score of attachment, for he was always more occupied with himself than with us.

Royalty now resembled one of those ancient

edifices, portions of which are continually decaying away. My ancestor, however, discovered energy enough this year to strike a *coup de maître*, by suppressing a rival title, that of *King and Master of the Violins* of France. This amusing monarchy still existed in the person of the Sieur Guignon, to whom (I am not much acquainted with the reason) the honours of a royal abdication were accorded. Few of the courtiers troubled themselves much about the suppression of this office, which was traceable to the royal period of the Valois' branch. This branch, which had always patronized the arts, had pleased to grant honorary distinctions and privileges to the kings of the violins, connected indeed with some more substantial emoluments, which accrued from duties laid on the leaders of various bands.

As for poor Guignon, thus deprived of his royal dignity, he was no longer fit for any thing but figuring at the carnival of Venice with the

other dethroned sovereigns, whom Candide met there; for although he was passionately devoted to his art, he was a mere ballad-maker. I sometimes saw him at the Chapelle, where he demeaned himself with the ordinary convulsive graces professionally usual with musicians. As I always addressed him kindly, I believe he entertained a particular regard for me. The first time I saw him after his fall, I made him a sign to approach.

“ Well, *Sieur Guignon*,” said I, “ you have had your share of disaster; your monarchy has been subjected to reform !”

“ It is not a pleasant subject, *monseigneur*,” replied he with a serious air, which I afterwards recalled to mind when circumstances had justified his prediction; “ take care that this mania for dethroning do not extend to more powerful monarchs than me.”

These words, to the meaning of which I attached no importance whatever, nevertheless

displeased me; and I turned my back on his fallen majesty, who did not long survive his royalty, dying, as some said, of old age, others, of a broken heart. Was it not to something like a feeling of the latter kind that the death of Charles V. was ascribed, although he had voluntarily abdicated his throne?

According to royal precedent, the Dauphin and Dauphiness made their first public entry into Paris after their marriage, on the 8th of July. They were well received by the Parisians. Marie-Antoinette was then universally beloved. Her personal charms and accomplishments fascinated all hearts; and they somewhat justified the compliment paid her by the Duke de Brissac, "You see there, Madame," said he, pointing to the crowds who thronged to see her, "a hundred thousand lovers, who are gratifying their eyes with the sight of you."

The *Poissardes* distinguished themselves on this occasion by some rather indelicate exclama-

tions, which amused the Dauphin, although, without affecting any great degree of prudery, he might have been disgusted. It was feared there might have been some reproaches or some degrading cries on the subject of the king and past events; but every thing went off well. The Dauphin and Dauphiness showed themselves at the principal theatres several times; but my brother gained nothing by the familiarity of being seen too closely. He was deficient in those agreeable manners, which have great attractions for the Parisian tradesmen, and in general he was far less popular than his wife.

On the 7th of July the king visited the Chateau de Muette, and we departed together for Compiègne. The Count d' Artois was already there since the 6th. It was during this privacy that he met with the following rather *piquant* adventure.

Since his marriage was decided, he was super-

intended with less anxiety. However, his *sous-gouverneur*, the Count de Montbel, seldom suffered him to go alone into the park ; through mistrust, doubtless, of the adjacent thickets, which might not only serve as a lurking-place to dangerous animals, but game of another sort, in his eyes of an equally dangerous description.

The Count d' Artois for some time past had been perusing at Versailles with especial attention the person of the sister of one of his footmen, a young and pretty creature, passionately devoted to the royal family, and only looking out for occasions to demonstrate the extent of her love for them. D'Artois was not the last to perceive the good wishes of the charming girl, and wishing to turn so devoted an attachment to its proper account, he came to an understanding with her brother on the subject. The latter, too much gratified by the honour intended by a prince of the blood to so near a relation, exerted all the zeal he could to

plead the count's cause with his sister. The difficulty was to open a communication between the interested parties: and the crafty valet could hit upon no better plan than to install the favoured fair one, under the disguise of a peasant, in the cottage of one of the park-keepers of Compiègne.

D' Artois being apprised of this arrangement, was hardly able to contain his impatience; and intimated to his governor his inclination to take an excursion in the park. M. de Montbel immediately ordered the carriage to be got ready, and made dispositions for following his royal highness; but finally a pedestrian excursion was proposed and agreed to.

The walk accordingly began; the longest circuits were taken; the governor got tired; but D' Artois, who was a good walker, made nothing of the exertion. In fine, they arrive at a cottage, ask for some milk, and then a request is made to see the operation of milking the cows, which produce so delicious a beverage.

"Stay here a while, Montbel," said D'Artois; "you are tired; I shall be back again in a minute."

But swifter than ever stag escaped from the huntsman's pursuit, the pupil escaped from his Argus, and hastened, not to the stable, but to the charming apartment where another Io was waiting for him in her true shape.

Time flies quickly when well employed. The Count d'Artois forgot that an hour had elapsed since he quitted the complaisant Montbel; but the latter, who had a more disengaged memory, began to think the count's absence unusually long, and a sudden suspicion darted across his mind. He got up from his seat, crossed two apartments—then two more—opened a third door, and there stood awhile thunderstruck; an ejaculation at last escaped him. My brother turned round, and without disconcerting himself, said to the pedagogue, parodying an expression of my grand uncle Philip V. when

caught in a similar delinquency—"Was there nobody to announce your visit, monsieur?"

The mystification of the *sous-gouverneur* may be easily conceived. His irritation found vent in reproaches addressed to his pupil, and threats to the valet and his sister. He then re-conducted the culprit to Compiègne, and thought it incumbent on his office to go immediately and make his majesty acquainted with his grandson's offence.

His majesty could hardly abstain from laughing while listening to poor Montbel's flurried statement, and then ended the conference by the following laconic response:—"Let care be taken to ascertain the health of the young countrywoman, and make her a gratuity of fifty louis."

This order, which was punctually executed, raised the surprise of the *sous-gouverneur* to the highest point, who could not for the soul of him comprehend the reason of so much in-

dulgence towards a young man on the point of being married. The Dauphiness and the Countess de Provence, hearing of the adventure, felt a desire to see the heroine, and the sight of her supplied them with matter for a long dissertation on the degree of beauty possessed by this fair *Perdita* of the Count d'Artois, who I can take upon myself to say was really charming; and far from being in the least ashamed, seemed to pride herself greatly on the honour she had received.

After residing at Compiègne till the 30th of August, we returned directly to Versailles, with the exception of the King, who slept at Muette, according to custom. During this journey, Madame Du Barry exerted herself more than ever to make herself agreeable to us. She obtained for me, by intervention with the king, a good round sum, which I had claimed of the comptroller-general; and I sent Montesquiou to express my thanks. She replied, "I

have no occasion to solicit any favour of his royal highness at present ; but should the king die, I trust he will not forget me."

The Countess de Provence and myself made our first public entrance into Paris, after our marriage, according to etiquette, on the 6th of September of the same year. For some time past the weather had been rainy, but the evening before our entry the clouds began to disperse ; the next day the sun shone brilliantly in a sky of unclouded azure, and the rain did not recommence till the day after the ceremony,—the 7th. This was referred to as a happy omen by certain courtiers about me, who took occasion in consequence to predict, that the day would come, when after a storm I should bring back fine weather to France. At that time I saw nothing in the prediction but one of those mischievous adulations, which are lavished as things of course on princes ; but I must confess, that I recalled it to mind with as much

emotion as pleasure, on my restoration in 1814.

After the usual routine of ceremony on the morning of our *entrée*, we dined at the Tuileries; and the day terminated by a promenade to the Fair of St. Laurent, which was distinguished by illuminations in honour of us. I was delighted with the manner in which we were received by the Parisians. There were some persons who even said that there were fewer acclamations at the reception of the Dauphin. It is true, that I was not sparing either of bows or smiles. I believe, moreover, that at that time I was a tolerably well looking prince; and the women who did not dare to tell me so *viva voce*, took occasion to intimate it by their looks. I am bound to confess, that the men did not exhibit the same admiring gallantry to the Countess de Provence: I presume because they did not see her with the same eyes as myself.

On our return to Versailles, the king, who

wished to learn from my own lips how the day went off, sent for me as soon as I arrived. I gave him a true and particular account, with a tone of gaiety which excited the same tone in him; and I added, in order to please him, that the acclamations of *Vive le Roi*, had greatly prevailed over those of "*Vive le Comte, et la Comtesse de Provence!*" However, there was nothing in it; for among the multitude of persons assembled on the occasion, there appeared to be few or none who remembered that my grandfather existed; so entirely had he lost his popularity at this epoch.

We showed ourselves according to custom on the following day, at the Theatre Français and the Opera; and were every where received with the most disinterested respect; for we had no expectation of the throne; and I was far from anticipating at that time that I should one day ascend it. From that moment I laid down a line of conduct which might retain the

public in the good opinion it had expressed towards me. I recognized that my credit at court would be augmented if I reinforced it by the nation's esteem; and that a prince has no true importance, but that which he derives from the affection of the people. In that his strength lies; and supported by that, he may even resist and defy the power of those who are politically above him.

CHAPTER XI.

The new Establishment of the Count and Countess d'Artois—Death of Madame d'Egmont—Disgrace of the Count de Broglie—Arrival of the Countess d'Artois—Letter of the Marquis de Brancas—The marriage—Joke of the Count de Provence on the Fire-works—Madame Louise, his aunt—Colloquy of the King and the Maréchal de Richelieu, on the sudden death of the Marquis de Chauvelin—The Chancellor Maupeou makes advances to the Count de Provence—They confer, and agree in opinion—The Dauphiness declares against the Chancellor—What she said of him.

FINE or bad weather was entirely in the hands of the favourite at Versailles. The king only saw with her eyes, and was no more than the minister of her good pleasure. It was she who

selected all the persons who were to compose the new establishment of the Count d'Artois; and the choice uniformly fell on all those who stood well with Madame Du Barry, either through their relatives or friends. She accordingly selected for my brother's premier écuyer, the Marquis de Polignac, the Prince d'Henin and the Chevalier de Crussol for his Captains of the Guard, and the Marquis Du Barry for the Colonel-commandant of the Swiss-Guards.

The last was the third brother of that name, poor in talent, but affluent in worth; a good man, rather reserved, whose reputation remained untarnished in the midst of the notorious turpitudes of his parents. He was accordingly distinguished at Versailles by the name of *Du Barry*, the *honest man*.

We lost, on the 14th of October this year, the Countess d'Egmont Pignatelli, daughter of the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu, and worthy of

her parent, which is no great eulogium on her virtues. This lady, as celebrated for her talents as her levities, was only thirty-one when she died. Her favourite maxim was, a "short life and a merry one," and that is drawing her portrait in a few words. Her winning manners made her a favourite at court, where her father was beginning to be detested. Her brother, the Duke de Fronsac, was, if possible, still more disliked; the latter was vice personified. Never did there exist an individual more competent to bring disgrace on an illustrious name.

Madame d'Egmont made more than one attempt to win my grandfather's heart, but it will scarcely be believed that her father himself threw impediments in the way of her designs; his pride preponderated in this particular instance over his ambition. It is the only honourable action of his life with which I am acquainted. At this very time he was carrying on his lawsuit against the President de Saint-

Vincent, a sufficiently dirty affair, in which the public saw nothing but one rogue opposed to another rogue.

We went to Fontainebleau at the beginning of October, in no small anxiety to be introduced to our new sister-in-law. The Marquis de Brancas, who was the commissaire appointed to receive the future Countess d'Artois at the Pont de Beauvoisin, set out for that purpose on the 22nd. He only obtained the function through a caprice; the king had in the first instance conferred it on the Count de Broglie—a sort of backstairs favourite, who for several years was at the head of a secret ministry connected with the exterior and interior police. This trust, and his communications with the king, puffed him up with pride; he aspired to take a more active part in public affairs; saw the favour of the Duke d'Aiguillon with an evil eye; and thinking the present a favourable opportunity to be importunate, he solicited the

mission to Turin. This was refused him; and losing his self-possession in his anger, he wrote so arrogant a letter to the minister, that the latter, in order to disgrace the Duke de Broglie, had only to read it at the council table. The king, notwithstanding his predilection for a man whose industry in his peculiar service he liked, completely deserted him, and a *lettre de cachet* exiled M. de Broglie to his estates. He set out with wrath in his heart, and while he was passing by Chanteloup, the Duc de Choiseul asked who was in the travelling carriage.

"The Duke de Broglie," it was replied, "going to exile."

"Ah!" exclaimed the duke; "he is taking ministerial office by the *queue*."

This *bon-mot* had a great run, and augmented the hatred which this mushroom favourite entertained against him whom he had aided in overthrowing. Few regretted him. He was a morose and irritable personage, re-

plete with self-opinion, who displeased every body without being at the pains to please any body.

The king received a letter from the Marquis de Brancas, which convinced us of what we had previously suspected, that my wife's sister was not prepossessing. His letter was couched in these terms :

“SIRE,—I have seen the Countess d'Artois ; the first day she pleased me, the second she interested me, and I am conducting her with a sincere pleasure to your majesty.”

This was saying in sufficiently clear terms that the beauty of my sister-in-law was a thing of air, for assuredly Brancas would not have doled out his eulogiums in this manner had it been otherwise. Moreover, my wife, who in the character of a good relation thought it becoming her to preserve silence up to this

time, then first made me acquainted with some family details, which my position compels me to keep secret.

I shall not give an account of the marriage of the Princess de Piedmont, as the same ceremonial which had been observed at the arrival of the Countess de Provence was observed on this occasion. The marriage was celebrated in the Chapelle de Versailles, on the 16th of November. The weather was dreadful; the rain fell in torrents, and the wind, which blew with great violence, appeared as if it would shake the edifice to its foundation. Every body appeared alarmed. It is the same at court as at sea; people are great believers in omens in both situations, and believe in every thing and nothing at the same time.

My brother, who was generally remarkable for liveliness and ease, wore that day an unhappy and embarrassed air, which had to me rather a comical effect. I thought he did not

find his wife to his taste, and might have returned with interest the raileries which he was profuse in bestowing on me at the time of my marriage; but a desire to preserve a good intelligence between the two sisters restrained me, the more especially as I saw in the Countess d'Artois a new auxiliary against the Dauphiness.

The fireworks, which had been put off to the 19th in consequence of the bad weather, surpassed those exhibited at my marriage. They represented the loves of Mars and Venus counteracted by the jealousy of Vulcan. While every one else was in an extacy at their magnificence, I leant towards the Count de Modène, and whispered in his ear—"It is a fine omen for my brother, truly—this mythological cuckoldom."

Modène laughed out, and far from keeping the secret, retailed my joke on all sides during the ball that followed; every body had a bite at it. The king himself found the subject

chosen rather *mal-a-propos*, and did not conceal his opinion. The poor manager did not know where to hide his head, and he could devise no other expedient to get out of the scrape than that of throwing the whole blame on the fire-work manufacturer.

About this time there happened at Versailles an accident which made a great impression on Louis XV. The Marquis de Chauvelin, first master of the wardrobe, suddenly fell dead with apoplexy by his side, while my grandfather was playing at cards with Madame Du Barry. Assistance was obliged to be obtained for the king, on whom the accident had the effect of a thunderbolt.

I learnt that the king said, next day, to the Duc de Richelieu, "Chauvelin has gone below before us, to secure my place and yours too, *maréchal*."

"Ah, sire!" replied the duke, who never liked to hear any mention of the other world,

well persuaded, doubtless, that he had no chance of faring so well in it as in this, "it is my duty, on all occasions, to give precedence to your majesty."

This was rather a hazardous *bon-mot*; but the king had the good sense to laugh at it, and added, "On this occasion, monsieur, your age will except you from the ordinary etiquette."

"But be assured, your majesty, that I shall not lay claim to the exception."

"But as to that," continued the monarch, "sooner or later we must all come to the same goal; and I tell you again, that Chauvelin has only preceded us by a few steps."

For some time past, the Chancellor Maupeou had paid court to me with unusual assiduity; and I did not repel his advances. He was a man of great wit, of profound erudition, great decision of character, and, in short, was endowed with all the qualities necessary for well governing a state. Justice has not been

done him: he has had faults assigned to him which he never possessed.

I was soon aware what it was that induced these advances: his object was to win me to his support, in case the king should happen to die soon. I was disposed to oblige him, but not to become too zealous a partizan in his defence; for before all things I saw, and resolved to avoid, the imprudence of committing myself to any cause unpopular with the nation. We had several conferences together on the subject of the law proceedings of Beaumarchais against Goëzman, a conseiller of the Parliament of Paris, the effect of which was to degrade completely the new magistracy, and morally to prepare its fall. The defendants had great difficulty to make the least head against Beaumarchais, who was always sure to have the laughers on his side, and he gave the poor counsellor plenty of laughter for his money. The chancellor manifested his grief to me at the turn which things were taking. His inclination was

to terminate the process instantly, by a *coup d'état*, which might operate equally on Goëzman and his adversary, and end the interminable and scandalous proceedings on both sides.

I was of the same opinion; but the king would not permit it. Madame Du Barry had at that time a quarrel—I know not on what subject—with the chancellor. Moreover, Beaumarchais, who was a consummate intriguer, had contrived to render her some underhanded services, in such a manner as to be favoured with her high protection. This lady always showed her devotion to her friends in the same manner, and she was never induced to abandon one of them on any occasion. The chancellor, finding himself thus thwarted, said to me at this conjuncture, with a tone of emotion, “In the way that things are going on, monseigneur, I greatly fear that if the king should die, the Dauphin will be compelled to quit the line of conduct which his grandfather has pursued.”

“He will be in the wrong, then,” I replied;

“for your great work will be more serviceable to him than to Louis XV., whose greater experience in affairs protects him.”

“I should be glad to know, monseigneur, the unreserved opinion of the Dauphin on the subject of the existing composition of the magistracy.”

“I rather think that he is ignorant of it himself, and will yield to the direction of the first impulse.”

“And your opinion, monseigneur? May I be permitted to inquire as to that?”

“Mine, M. le Chancelier, is, that we are greatly indebted to you for your measure; and that if we fail in due gratitude for the benefit, we shall be in the wrong.”

“This admission of your royal highness gives me the greatest pleasure. I may then trust to your support when a contingency arrives.”

“You may depend on it. I shall frankly explain to my brother my sentiments as to the

should bring myself to show him any clemency."

These words from the lips of Marie-Antoinette were undoubtedly a strong proof of her dislike of M. de Maupeou.

CHAPTER XII.

Madame de Montglas, and her two illustrious Lovers—
The ferocious Husband, and the bloody Sword—Cause
of the disgrace of the Marquis de Monteynard.—Quar-
rel between the Dauphin and the Count d'Artois on the
subject of a Country Dance—A Hiss repaid by a blow
of the Fist—The King sends for the Count de Pro-
vence, and engages him to be the mediator in recon-
ciling the parties—The Dauphin's natural good feelings
—Remarks of the Author on the family of Orleans—
Gluck and Piccini, and the rival factions in music.

BEFORE I proceed to the details of the death of
Louis XV., I, in due order, ought to relate some
prefatory anecdotes of a piquant description ;
and the first that comes to my hand is the adven-
ture of Madame de Montglas with two men of

rank and fashion—the Prince de Nassau and the Count d'Esterhazy, a Hungarian grandee at that time on a visit of amusement to Paris.

This lady, already of a certain age, but still handsome, and as coquettish as witty, was wife of the president of the chamber of accounts at Montpellier, who, through the intervention of his communications with the Count d'Eu, governor of Languedoc, was become that prince's *chef du conseil*. M. de Montglas bore the reputation of a well-educated man; he was an able financier, and was fully competent to manage the affairs of his employer. The latter, old, infirm, and gouty, never stirred from his chateau, where he had no other pleasure than sporting, which he still contrived to enjoy by means of a chair on springs, which he could guide as he pleased.

While M. de Montglas was immersed in the industrious labours of his closet, his wife employed herself as industriously in extending the num-

ber of her conquests, and prided herself not a little on being able to lead the Count de Nassau in her chains. It could have been wished, if the latter, remarkable for his brilliant talents, had paid a little more attention to his person. Even his mistress's entreaties could make no amendment in him in this particular, and all the *éclat* of his rank was requisite to palliate his inattention to the first laws of cleanliness. But just at this time there appeared before the eyes of Madame de Montglas, the substantial vision of Prince Esterhazy, young, brilliant, perfumed from top to toe—in fine, an Adonis; but then a German Adonis, limbed like a Hercules. He thought the lady attractive; and gave her to understand so. The latter, on her side, did not keep him in the dark as to her appreciation of his merits. The parties came together: their connexion became intimate; and Madame de Montglas, without dismissing the Prince de Nassau, accepted the homage of the handsome Hungarian.

She flattered herself with being enabled in this manner, to have two strings to her bow: but the devil who is ever on tip-toe when any malicious trick is to be played, contrived to play off one on her, after his more especial fashion. The Dulcinia had a reply to make to both her swains at the same time; and in her agreeable flurry of mind, she wrote the address of the Prince de Nassau on Prince Esterhazy's letter, and the address of Prince Esterhazy on that intended for the Prince de Nassau.

The Prince de Nassau unseals the letter which was not intended for him, runs it over, quickly guesses the enigma; and then seating himself at his secretaire, dispatched the following letter to his rival.

“A little mistake having placed in the hands of the Prince de Nassau, a letter which Madame de Montglas intended for Count Esterhazy, the Prince will be obliged by the latter sending

him the billet, with which the lady doubtless intended to honour him, and which he presumes to be in the count's possession, in consequence of the same mistake."

The colonel of hussars, transported with indignation at the reception of this missive, sent the Marquis de Chabillant to his rival, to demand satisfaction. A duel ensued. The two champions met; fought with equal skill, and Prince Esterhazy was wounded. The seconds interfered; and it was agreed that Madame de Montglas should terminate the quarrel by declaring in favour of one of the two rivals. The Count de Chabillant, who did not like this lady, did not lose the occasion to gratify his secret hostility. He called on her; related what had passed; informed her that Prince Esterhazy's wound was a most unlucky one, and that it would be necessary for him, in consequence, to renounce the joys of the world, should he

survive. The lady was in deep affliction at first ; but on reflection, resolved to turn this confidential hint to her advantage.

The day which was to decide the fate of the two rivals arrived ; Madame de Montglas being called to pronounce sentence, pretended to hesitate for some time, and finally declared in favour of the Prince de Nassau. The surprise at this choice was universal ; for the latter could bear no comparison in personal advantages to the handsome Hungarian. However, M. de Chabrillant was not yet satisfied with his malice, and in order to complete his triumph, resolved to make the whole affair known in Paris and at court. Madame's choice was no longer a mystery : the news of the deception soon reached her ears, and exasperated with having been played such a trick, she went immediately to Prince Esterhazy. A sentimental explanation ensued, and the heroine was reconciled to the victorious colonel of hussars.

Things, therefore, were happily established as before ; but happiness does not last for ever. The Hungarian solicited his fair one's portrait. A secret visit was consequently made to the famous Doyen ; but the latter, who was a better painter of portraits than keeper of secrets, dropped a few expressions, which were repeated to the Prince de Nassau. The lover, again deceived, gave way to a transport of passion, hurried to Doyen's, forced the door, and there the first object which met his eyes, was Madame de Montglas, her charms scarcely concealed by a thin gauze, supported in a studied and interesting attitude by Prince Esterhazy. The Prince de Nassau was determined to efface this new offence in the blood of his rival. A second duel ensued, and produced so great a sensation, that the President de Montglas found himself compelled to interpose and remove his wife from the scene by a *lettre de cachet*.

This event had been preceded by another, which had terminated more fatally. The Prêtre de Lamartière, who was very pretty and rather notorious for her amorous adventures, had a professed lover—an accountant—whose name I do not recollect. The latter was superseded in a very unpolite manner by the Marquis de Gamache, who was in great favour with the fair sex. The discomfited lover, whose rank in society prevented him from challenging his fortunate rival, was resolved at least to be revenged of him. He found means to apprise the injured husband of the name of the individual who enjoyed his wife's favours; and waited in secret the punishment of the delinquent.

M. de Lamartière, like a husband behind the age, had the simplicity to take the matter very seriously. He employed a *ruse*, succeeded in surprising the two lovers, and without any preface, dealt the marquis a sound box on the ear.

The latter drew his sword; the angry husband did the same; the duel was fought in the street, and concluded by the death of the unfortunate lover, who was run through the body and fell dead on the pavement. The victor immediately re-ascended the stairs to the room where he had left his wife, and showing her the blood-stained sword, "It was your own fault, madam," he said to her with a gloomy frown; "do you know whose blood this is?"

The lady, according to custom, immediately fainted, and M. de Lamartière, who thought it of more importance to take care of himself than of her, immediately betook himself to flight. The king, however, who was apprized of the event by M. de Sartines, desired that it should be publicly reported; that the Marquis de Gamache had died by bursting a blood vessel: and M. de Lamartière, thus set free from restraint, re-appeared; but he shortly after died a natural death—a circumstance which did not prevent

certain good souls from giving out, that remorse for the death of his victim had shortened his days.

The disgrace of the Marquis de Monteynard, happened about the same time. Having been introduced to the king by the Prince de Condé, as a minister of the first class, he had entered the new ministry, which was formed on the fall of the Duke de Choiseul. His royal highness, ⁱⁿ according his patronage to the marquis, had an understanding with him, that the latter was to promote his obtaining the office of master-general of the artillery, which had been suppressed as useless for the sake of public retrenchment. The future minister promised all that was required of him, and perhaps would have kept his word, if the prince had maintained himself in a position to make the claim ; but the quarrel on the subject of the parliaments having arisen directly afterwards between the king and the princes, the latter abandoned the court ; and his royal high-

ness was of course obliged to renounce his pretensions to the office he aspired to.

But after his reconciliation with my grandfather, the Prince de Condé, supported by Madame Du Barry, wished to revive his claim; not doubting that M. de Monteynard would be always equally disposed to do him service. But the minister, who in the meanwhile had time to reflect on the advantages of suppressing the office, forgot his promises to his benefactor; and when he saw that he was about to return to favour, he wrote a memorial, in which he took upon himself to demonstrate to the king, among other reasons adduced, the danger of investing a prince of the blood with a post of so great importance.

This was attacking the king on his weak side. He accordingly turned a deaf ear to the Countess Du Barry and his royal highness, whenever they brought the subject on the tapis. The favourite, being urged by the interested party,

applied as a last resource to M. de Monteynard, who was lavish in his protestations of attachment to the prince, and in promises to do his utmost to change the king's determination. But the Prince de Condé, seeing that matters were at a stand, re-applied personally to the king himself, who, tired out with so many importunities, concluded by confessing to the favourite, that he only acted according to the instructions of his war minister, who had demonstrated in a memoir the disadvantages of conferring such a post on the prince. Madame Du Barry, who, in effecting the reconciliation of the latter with my grandfather, had undertaken to satisfy him on this head, no longer kept any terms. She discovered to his majesty the whole conduct of M. de Monteynard towards his royal highness—his promises and his ingratitude; and she did this so effectually, that the king, indignant at the minister's disloyalty, treated him from that moment with a freezing coldness, which announced his approaching fall.

I was not the last to be informed of this intrigue, and I immediately inferred that the Duke d'Aiguillon was not far behindhand in appropriating the remaining spoils of the Duke de Choiseul. The result was, that Madame Du Barry worked with so much zeal, that on the 28th of January the Duke de la Vrillière was despatched to Paris to announce his dismissal to the Marquis de Monteynard; and so perfectly was his disgrace understood beforehand, that even the Swiss Guard at the hotel of the minister of war, said to the messenger when he presented himself there, "I am afraid, my lord, you bring us bad news."

"You have guessed rightly, my friend," replied the duke.

As soon as M. de Monteynard was dismissed, the Duke d'Aiguillon, as I had predicted, took his place in the war ministry—at first *ad interim*, but afterwards without qualification. He was then at the height of his ambition; but

the death of my grandfather was soon about to put a period to his triumph.

This was rather a dull winter at court, notwithstanding my brother's nuptials. The Dauphin was not very competent to amuse us, though he occasionally partook of our amusements. He danced—but awkwardly and ungracefully. D'Artois rallied him on the subject from time to time; but he did not like being quizzed by him, and resolved to take private lessons unknown to him. We were to perform a new country dance at a *soirée* which I gave at my house. The Dauphin, who was to take a part, thought it best to rehearse the figure; but in the very nick of the performance, the room door opened, and the Count d'Artois made his appearance. He seeing the Dauphin so finely employed, could not repress some outward signs of gaiety. My elder brother took the matter seriously, and in an authoritative tone desired that the ball-room might

be cleared of all who were present at the rehearsal, of course including the Count d'Artois. The latter resenting the affront; at first resisted the order, and even allowed himself to be put out by main force by one of the suite; but making his escape directly after from those who excluded him, he went up into one of the galleries of the ball-room, just as the Dauphin was finishing the country-dance, and repeatedly hissed the performance. My elder brother, who was very angry, turned to the spot whence the censorious sounds proceeded, and perceiving D'Artois there, who, in order to enjoy the result of his little malice, was only partially concealed, he hastened up to him and pommelled him in such a manner, that the poor lad, in a great fright, and finding himself incompetent to cope with his assailant, called out for help. Some of the attendants then came to him, and snatched him from his brother's hands.

The news of this event was diffused through

the court with the rapidity of lightning. D'Artois and his wife condoled together; the Dauphin, who already regretted his excitement, exhibited an equally sorrowful countenance. At last I received an intimation that the king wished to see me.

"It would seem," said his majesty, "that my children, regardless of consequences, wish to scandalize France by the spectacle of their disunion; and not content with offering offence in words, have actually come to blows. I am very angry with the Count d'Artois."

"But sire," I took the liberty of saying, "it was he that was beaten."

"But why did he offend his brother? He forgets that the Dauphin will be one day king."

"But it seems to me, sire, that the latter should be the last to remind him of it."

These words seemed to produce an impression on the king, who added in a more softened tone, "Your elder brother is, I confess, a little

rough in his manners, notwithstanding his good qualities; but it is for you, who are the most reasonable of my grandchildren, to mediate between your two brothers. It is a part which I foresee the future reserves for you to perform."

No compliment had ever appeared to me more flattering than this admission by the king, of my superiority over my brothers. I coloured with satisfaction; and told my grandfather that I should leave nothing undone, by my advice and my friendship, to preserve concord among us.

The king then told me to go to the Dauphin, and to state to him, in his name, that although he blamed the conduct of the Count d'Artois, he should have been better pleased if he had exhibited more moderation; and that he expected that this quarrel should be made up by my intervention, without compelling him in any way to interfere.

I instantly obeyed. The Dauphiness, whom I saw first, expressed an anxious desire for the reconciliation of the two brothers. I told her the king's wishes, and we went together to her husband, who was walking about his room with hasty steps, disordered countenance, and down-cast eyes. Directly he saw me he came up with an embarrassed air, and said, "I know you come to reproach me, and I deserve it. I confess I have acted very foolishly. I ought to have laughed instead of being angry, and you cannot blame me more than I blame myself."

These words, which smoothed the way for my intervention, affected me deeply. I recognized the excellent heart of our elder brother, and I replied, "That far from wishing to dwell on the past, I, on the contrary, was come to effect a reconciliation." Marie-Antoinette then proposed to go to the Count d'Artois. The Dauphin required to be a little pressed on this point; but finally yielded to our persuasions.

Our unexpected appearance was like a thunder clap. The Countess d'Artois, whose resentment was not appeased, quitted the room when we entered, and my wife, who was present, was obliged to run after her to bring her back.

The Dauphin threw himself on the neck of his brother with affecting *abandon*. D'Artois at first pretended to turn his head away; but incapable of cherishing rancour for any length of time, he embraced him in his turn with the best possible grace.

At this very moment the Countess d'Artois re-appeared with her sister; the fraternal caresses were then renewed, and I took advantage of the general emotion to make my escape, in order to apprize the king of the happy result of my mission. My grandfather was delighted to find peace re-established without any painful exertion of his supremacy in effecting it; for no man had more tact in public affairs than

Louis XV.; and no man troubled himself so little about them.

A short time after, the king had the mortification to see the Prince de Conti, who still persisted in his opposition, declare in favour of Beaumarchais, and as soon as the sentence of the parliament was given against him, ask him to supper at the Temple. I was equally disgusted at this unusual proceeding with the king, and inspired the Dauphin with similar views of it. A king ought always to be more jealous of exacting respect of princes of the blood than other subjects, since their position gives them a dangerous influence over the passions of the multitude. On this account I will never grant the title of royal highness to the Orleans branch, which has been soliciting the distinction since the restoration in 1814. This family will be always dangerous to the elder branch of the Bourbons, and true policy dictates the necessity of keeping them at a distance from the

throne rather than increasing their relations with it.

To these causes of internal agitation was added another—of a rather trivial description, it is true, but one which nevertheless caused a division of parties at the court. The Dauphiness was passionately fond of music, and had preserved a grateful predilection for Gluck, one of the first composers of the age, who had given her lessons at Vienna. The latter, encouraged by the patronage of the Dauphiness, had arrived in France to effect a revolution in music, which the partisans of Lulli and Rameau exerted all their efforts to counteract.

Fashion at first ranged itself on the side of the new Orpheus, but a little after the favourite, Madame Du Barry, took it into her head to make herself the head of a party, and to set up the altar of one musical sect against that of the other. The composer Piccini was sent for from Italy—a composer who, although

possessing the highest skill in his art, was far from equalling Gluck. However, the rivalry thus conjured up was sufficient to divide the court and the town into two violent factions—the Gluckists and the Piccinists. The public writers took up the cudgels, and rushed into the thick of the encounter: the battle was fought with volleys of songs, epigrams, and pamphlets, and there was unremitting war between two armies of fanatics, having the Dauphiness at the head of one side, and the favourite of the other; and in a short time there was more ardour manifested for the supremacy of music than for the possession of power.

CHAPTER XIII.

Musical concession of Madame de Tavannes—The Prince de Beauvau and the Count de Modène speak to the Count de Provence in favour of the Duke de Choiseul—He is urged on the subject by the Dauphiness—How he manages to escape from the embarrassment—The Duke de Choiseul's justificatory memorial—The Dauphin's letter to the Count de Provence on the subject—Mortification of Marie-Antoinette—Intrigues of the Dukes d'Aiguillon and Richelieu to retain power—Celebrated sermon of the Bishop of Senez, and its results.

THE Dauphiness was impatient of contradiction on the subject of music; she was a partisan, heart and soul, in favour of Gluck, and considered a Piccinist as a mortal enemy. She forgot all her usual graces of manner in the pre-

sence of one, and I have seen her turn her back on a Piccinist, who had the presumption to maintain his opinion in her hearing.

“Madame,” I took the liberty of saying to her one day, “music is the last subject on which sentence should be given before the evidence is heard.”

The Dauphiness warmly opposed Madame de Tavannes being admitted as one of her maids of honour, because she had had the misfortune to receive Piccini at her house. But the lady showed address; she affected to hear the music of Gluck with additional pleasure every time she was in the Dauphiness’s presence, and at last concluded by confessing his superiority to the Italian. Marie-Antoinette then no longer hesitated to give her the office, and sometimes quoted her as an example of conversions effected by her German Orpheus. Such were the occupations of the court a short time before the death of the king.

The health of Louis XV. was rapidly declining: this I learnt from one of his confidential *valets de chambre*, as well as from La Martinière, his head surgeon. We might lose him at any given moment, and nothing was thought of to prepare for the catastrophe. The secret council of the Dauphiness wished to place the Duke de Choiseul and the Archbishop of Toulouse at the head of affairs; but as the Dauphin's repugnance to the duke was well known, it was resolved to say nothing to him on the subject till the embarrassment of his situation, caused by the king's death, should give him no time for reflecting on the nature of his choice. It was thought prudent to obtain my suffrage, in the fear that the new king might resort to my advice, and in consequence I was visited by the Prince de Beauvau, whose character I respected, and the Count de Modène, whom I personally esteemed.

I had thus to make a simultaneous stand

against these gentlemen, for I had not a sufficiently high opinion of the talents and qualities of the ex-minister to wish to see him at the head of the cabinet. I remembered some expressions of my mother with respect to him, which had left a painful impression on my mind; and among other plausible reasons for my distaste, I felt convinced that, to please the Dauphiness, M. de Choiseul would sacrifice even the leading interests of the state. I therefore eluded giving any positive answer to these courtiers; kept on the defensive, and sent away the Prince de Beauvau dissatisfied with the result of his mission. I had otherwise a respect for him; for he was a man of honour, uniting philosophy with Christianity; well informed, amiable, obliging, and generally liked. His wife, who also stood high in general opinion, was worthy of the eulogiums which her numerous partisans bestowed on her.

I was more candid with Modène; I made

him comprehend how disadvantageous the elevation of the Duke de Choiseul would be to me and the persons of my establishment ; and having some tact, he quickly conceived the force of my reasoning. We afterwards agreed on the nature of my answer to his employers, and I trusted to be relieved from further importunity on this head, but I was deceived.

My two brothers and myself were a few days after walking at Trianon, each giving his wife his arm, with true plebeian attention, when suddenly the Dauphiness, quitting her husband with a laughing air, ran to me, separated me from the Countess de Provence, to whom D'Artois then offered his arm, while the Dauphin took the latter's wife under his protection. We all laughed at the change, ran, romped, and pursued one another ; and as soon as we were a little out of hearing of the rest, the Dauphiness abruptly said to me—"I should be glad to know, brother, why you dislike the Duke

de Choiseul, and what complaint you have to make against him."

I was the more embarrassed by this sudden frankness, as in politics it is usual to act in so opposite a manner.

The question was, however, irrevocably proposed, and I made an effort to evade a reply by some expressions of gallantry.

"I assure you, madame," I replied, "if I had previous reasons for complaint against the Duke, I must have pardoned him from the day he conferred on France a princess willing to undertake his defence; but in reality I consider M. de Choiseul as a talented and amiable man; and I am bound to be grateful to him at this very moment, for the happiness I enjoy in your society."

The Dauphiness pretended to take these expressions for an engagement; "I may rely then," she replied, "that this favour, as you term it, will secure your future good wishes to the duke."

"Ah, madame," I exclaimed, wishing to distract her attention by an attack of courtesy, "I find it would be impossible for me to refuse any thing to Marie-Antoinette."

"I have no doubt, brother, of your good intentions; and if I persist in claiming your protection for the duke, it is to demonstrate how greatly I value it."

"My protection, madame, is of very little weight; but my respect for the king's inclinations ought to prevent ——"

"I should be unhappy to bring you into disfavour with the king," replied Marie-Antoinette, interrupting me; "I only wish to engage beforehand your support for the duke at a future period, when I trust I shall be sufficiently fortunate to remove the restraint which is imposed upon you at the present time."

Women have an admirable instinct in taking one at one's word. It was in vain I put on the court smile, which usually accompanies vague

expressions ; the Dauphiness, as it will be seen, gave a positive sense to all of mine.

Seeing myself thus driven into a corner, and being unwilling to oppose myself directly to the Dauphiness's wishes, I determined to grapple with the difficulty. I feigned to yield to her solicitations, and promised to support M. de Choiseul with my brother, should the latter deem it expedient to consult me on the subject.

While I assumed a serious air in making this remark, my sister-in-law was privately scrutinizing my countenance, to ascertain whether she might in reality rely on my sincerity ; at last she said, " I cannot be sufficiently grateful to you, brother, for your good-will ; and be assured that Marie-Antoinette will not forget to express her gratitude as she ought. I should not, however, disguise that you will have occasion for all your sagacity to divest the Dauphin of his prejudices on the subject of the duke."

My sister-in-law was far from being aware of

the fine game she was providing for me, in thus authorizing me to treat on so important a point with my brother, which I had never taken the liberty to do before; and therefore seizing the first advantageous interval of the conversation, I said, "But above all, madame, I wish first to come to a written understanding with M. de Choiseul on many points which I think expedient to be cleared up. If he returns a satisfactory answer, I promise him my support; if not, I reserve to myself the right to remain neutral as at present."

"That's very reasonable," she replied; "and if you have no objection to confide the writing to me, I will take care that it shall reach him."

"Oh, madame," I replied gaily, "I am not so ill-provided with faithful servants as to be unable to correspond with Chanteloup without encroaching on the good-will of yours."

I meant that these expressions should not

awake the distrust of the Dauphiness, by exhibiting too much facility. She replied that “ I was at liberty to act according to my own discretion, provided my proceeding produced the result she expected.”

As I did not wish to prolong this *tête-à-tête* further, we returned to join the rest of the family, who had no suspicions of any thing having passed. The next day I wrote to the Duke de Choiseul, in the spirit of my understanding with the Dauphiness; and I confided my missive to the Count de Modène, who was delighted to be invested with a negociation of so much importance.

I was not long in expecting my answer; it was far from being satisfactory; but as I had made up my mind to pretend a perfect credulity, I took occasion to inform the Dauphiness that the duke had supplied me with the requisite explanations, and that I should proceed as I had pledged myself to do; in consequence her

countenance brightened up at the intelligence. She flattered herself that I had completely fallen into the net which she had so adroitly laid for me. I was, therefore, not in the least surprised the following week by the Dauphin taking me aside, in order to show me a list of several statesmen, among whom was the Duke de Choiseul; he asked me what I thought of it.

I was no longer taken off my guard, and I had not read "The Prince" of Machiavel for nothing.

"Before I give you an answer," I replied, "I should be glad to hear your own opinion of these gentlemen—my intention not being to direct your choice, but to discuss the selection you have yourself made. You can hardly disapprove this measure of precaution."

My brother understood me, and running over the list, in which the concoctors of it had taken especial care to assemble as many inferior capa-

cities as possible, in order to throw the Duke de Choiseul into stronger relief—he suddenly stopped at the name of the latter, and pointing to it with his finger, said, “That’s a man whom I am solicited to place at the head of affairs, but I cannot bring my mind to it.”

“It would nevertheless be popular with a great many persons; and would, above all, please a personage who is deeply interested in his favour, and whom, I am sure, you will have the truest satisfaction in pleasing.”

“It is true, brother, I am extremely sorry to disoblige my wife in this affair; but there are some dislikes which it is impossible to conquer, and M. de Choiseul shall never be my minister.”

I took advantage of this admission to tell the Dauphin that having myself been solicited in favour of the ex-minister, I had addressed a written series of questions to him, to which he had replied with his own hand, and that if he

wished, I would lay before him the duke's justification.

“Willingly,” he replied; “I shall be glad to peruse it.”

I quitted the Dauphin, and going straight home, I sent him the reply in question, still through the intervention of Modène, whom the adroit Choiseul mistakingly considered as devoted to his interests. I thought that my brother, after reading this justification, might wish to confer with me about it; but he answered my purpose better, for the same evening I received the following note, without date or signature, and which I have always made a point of preserving.

“I do not know what impression the ambiguous phrases of the duke may have produced on you; as for me, they have more than ever confirmed me in the resolution of not having M. de Choiseul for my minister. The respect I owe to the memory of our august father,

moreover, precludes me from any connexion with the duke. There are some recollections which can never be effaced, whether the cause of them be well or ill-founded. I beg of you; therefore, to drop this subject in future; and in order that no one may have the unnecessary trouble of reviving it, I give you full authority to make known my resolution, which is unchangeable."

I should have been glad to have given a good round sum for this letter; and accordingly. I quickly perceived the full amount of its value. It was my magic clue through the labyrinth of the Choiseul cabal. I lost no time in making it known to the Dauphiness, who read it with painful mortification, and then begged my advice as to the course she ought to follow.

"I can only recommend you," was my reply, "not to persist, at least for the present, in forcing the inclinations of the Dauphin. I even

think it would be more prudent in you to propose a minister to him whom he might regard with a more favourable eye than the duke; for instance, the Archbishop of Toulouse."

The Dauphiness, who was particularly tenacious of her projects, would not listen to this proposition; and sooner than give up M. de Choiseul, she preferred giving up whatever influence she might have exerted in the choice of another minister. She besides did not like the Archbishop of Toulouse, and even opposed her mentor the Abbé de Vermont, who wished to place him at the head of affairs. The latter, however, persisted, and finally succeeded in introducing to the ministry that prelate, whose intervention was destined to be so fatal to the monarchy.

The Duke d' Aiguillon, not liking to contemplate his dismissal from his high office on the king's death, also thought it expedient to pay his court to me; and as I had considered

myself at liberty to offer a few political gallantries to Madame Du Barry, took it into his head that I should not refuse him my protection. My first intimation of his object was in the sudden sunshine of military favours which fell on the members of my household; and then I presume, willing to push his approaches to the heart of the citadel, he sent to me as a canvasser for my favour the Marquis de Montesquiou, who pretended to serve him with the zeal of personal devotion, though he most cordially detested him; while I, on my part, aware of the irrevocable prejudices of my sister-in-law against his return to power, continued to reply with fine words to all the solicitations made to me, and remained neuter in the midst of these intrigues.

The Duke de Richelieu too, who had no inclination to be cashiered, nibbled about me, like an old moth whose wings had been often singed in the fire, in order to obtain my support after the king's death. I began to take a certain

important place in the state : it was thought, I could perceive, that I was destined to play a grand rôle, and the persuasion, I confess, was not disagreeable to me. This estimation was the result of my prudence and reserve : those who loved me not were compelled to do me justice, and I preserved this reputation during the whole reign of my brother, notwithstanding the little favour I was in with the queen, who was in other respects omnipotent ; and even that princess, forgetting her personal mistrust of me, often came to request my advice ; which was, certainly, demonstrating the high estimate she formed of my opinion.

The kingdom was about to change its aspect—the king's life was approaching its termination ; but his death was not yet contemplated, although the bishop de Senez undisguisedly predicted it, in the famous sermon he preached before the king on March the 8th, 1774. This prelate, who owed his elevation to his good

conduct, was the son of a hatter. It would occupy too much time to relate how he was enabled to reach those high dignities in the church, against which his birth would seem to close the door. The archbishop of Paris was one of his principal protectors.

I was astonished at the boldness of his sermon, at the delivery of which I was present with the royal family. He addressed the king in his old age with a freedom which had been unknown at court since the time when Massillon addressed the king in his boyhood. The congregation could not help trembling, when he pronounced from the pulpit a prediction of which the full truth was nevertheless not then imagined. "In forty days Nineveh shall be no more." I fancy I still hear the words resounding in my ears; so great was the impression which they made upon me.

Madame Du Barry complained bitterly of the bishop's marked reproof of the individuals in-

vested with the king's confidence. She considered it intended for herself and the Duke d'Aiguillon, and solicited my grandfather to visit it with his displeasure; but he replied, "You have nothing to fear, madame, from the expressions of the bishop of Senez. He has followed his *metier* in the pulpit: but I shall not the less exert my right of judging whether my friendship is ill or well bestowed. You possess it, and nothing can withdraw it from you."

This assurance enchanted the countess, who soon forgot, with her natural levity of character, her grievance against the bishop, and his prophecy of the fall of Nineveh.

CHAPTER XIV.

First performance of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*—Approach of Louis XV.'s death—Advice given by his head surgeon, La Martinière—A select party at Trianon—The young beauty and the small-pox—Return of the king to Versailles—Agitation of the court—Heroic conduct of the king's sisters—Louis XV. obliged to confess himself—The Count de Muy—His advice to the Dauphin and the Count de Provence.

ONE event rapidly follows another in that succession of vicissitudes which constitute history: and the interest created by a sermon was quickly effaced by that which was occasioned by an opera. The *Iphigenia* of Gluck was about to be performed, and his admirers expected wonders from it. The Dauphiness neg-

lected nothing to augment the cabal of the Gluckists, and exhibited as much zeal on the subject, as if she were adding a new jewel to the crown. The celebrated first performance took place on the 20th of April. An immense crowd of spectators, composed of the flower of the court, and the first families of Paris, filled the vast circuit of the opera house. Nobody was absent—princes of the blood, ministers, ambassadors, noblemen, &c. The king was almost alone on that day: and we remarked the non-appearance of the favourite.

My sister-in-law appeared greatly excited; she even deigned to join the applauses which resounded from all sides, and the Countess de Provence seconded her approbation. In short, there was a general enthusiasm, and the triumph of Gluck was complete.

We returned to Versailles enchanted with our victory. The Dauphiness, laying aside etiquette, could not abstain from going to apprise

the king of the success of the German musician. His majesty appeared to take vast interest in the matter, although he was, in all probability, a Piccinist at heart. However, he pretended with a laugh to be a most disinterested judge, since, as he said, he could not sing a note of either one music or the other. In fact, this was the case with him, as far as regarded the most trivial airs.

But the moment approached when more important cares were about to occupy the attention of the Dauphiness. I cannot approach the memorable epoch of the transit from a reign which was a personification of power, to one which only preserved its external appearance, without the conviction that it is necessary to treat it with the impartiality and frankness of an historian. I am, besides, uncertain whether these memoirs may ever see the day, and as, under any circumstances, they must do so at a very distant epoch, I am at liberty to discover un-

disguisedly the source of the monarchy's misfortunes, while I retain the respect which is due to illustrious calamity.

The ten last years of the reign of Louis XV. would have rendered a revolution inevitable, if any ambitious character of rank could have been found to desire the overthrow of the throne. But the universal moral corruption of the period produced none but enervated individuals, who preferred licentious pleasure to glory. A man of mark might perhaps, even at that time, exist among the people; but certainly the hero was not to be found among the people of illustrious names, the Broglies, the Maurice de Saxes, the Lovendals, the ministers, or the magistrates. I looked round in vain for some distinguished nobleman, whose soul was imbued with the lofty feelings of the ages passed away.

It was to this penury of superior minds, that the tottering monarchy owed its prolonged ex-

istence. All who came before the public with the least *eclat* appertained to the inferior classes; the noblesse persevered in its state of political inertness.

But towards the last years of the reign of Louis XV., the latter was observed to follow a new bent. It undertook to patronize the philosophers; and the courtiers deceived themselves into the belief of being *esprits forts*, because they adopted the principles of Voltaire. They conceived the idea that in sympathizing with the people on this point, they should derive a new degree of consideration from it; incapable of perceiving that the very philosophy they encouraged, tended to confound all ranks, and that they would be the first victims of the maxims of liberty and equality they propagated with so much zeal.

It was at that time, that a new power was seen to raise its head, and to share authority with the magistracy, which alone had escaped

the universal levelling results of the despotism of Louis XIV. This was the power of the press, (*gens des lettres*,) which passed from a condition of entire subjugation to one of absolute independence. They undermined the throne and the monarchical institutions, and constituted the chief cause of their entire subversion. Voltaire gave the first impulse to this *mouvement*; d'Alembert, Diderot, Rousseau, and some others seconded it, without expressly making common cause with him. This new power in the state had to combat at once the royal authority and the magistracy, impatient as it was of having so long prostrated itself at its foot.

The upper clergy had long excited the discontent of the nation by its wealth, prodigality, and ambition. It deserted the churches, and seldom was to be seen except at Versailles. But at the same time, taking advantage of its influence at court, it exercised an intolerable tyranny over the lower clergy and the people;

and while it excited fear by its intolerance, it excited contempt by the licentiousness of its manners.

All the authorities of the nation thus exhibited a continually augmenting disorganization, and no hand sufficiently energetic could be found to prop the trembling edifice of the social structure. The king, its sole support, was himself on the point of being withdrawn by death. A restless agitation, forerunner of the tempest, was heard in low minacious murmurs. The danger was the more imminent, for the very reason that no one foreseeing whence it was to come, remained in fatal security—for what was there apparently to fear? The hostile magistracy had been banished; no faction was exhibited either at the court or in the city; we were no longer living in the time of the Guises or the Retzes; consequently every thing tended to maintain a condition of infatuated blindness.

The last hour of our grandfather was now on

the point of striking ; but he had not the least idea of it. He changed none of his usual habits ; his sole occupation was the care of his pleasures, and the entire gratification of all his inclinations. Madame Du Barry, the fair dispenser of his amusements, had latterly adopted, in its fullest extent, the complaisant tactics of Madame de Pompadour, and feeling that the king's taste stood in need of the occasional excitement of novelty, she permitted the transfer of his devotions occasionally to such transitory beauties as gratified that inclination, without permanently affecting his fidelity ; for, in reality, Louis XV. was at heart the most constant man in his kingdom.

His head surgeon, La Martinière, ineffectually entreated him to take care of himself ; to be more moderate in his pleasures ; but he turned a deaf ear to his remonstrances, and doubtless considered himself perfect master of his existence, as if he were able to prolong it with the

same ease as to augment his armies or double his taxes.

In the meanwhile, chance or something else threw in his way a young girl of eighteen, of consummate grace and beauty. Louis XV. immediately set his confidential allies in motion, as regularly as he would have caused a forest to be beaten by his piqueurs, in order to drive the game within his range. The Petroniuses of Versailles, after having set off the attractions of the young lady by as rich a dress as they could procure, conveyed her to Trianon, where a select party was to be given for the occasion.

I think myself at liberty to stigmatize, while recording their names on this occasion, the persons present at this last banquet of Belshazzar. They were Mesdames de Mirepoix, de Flavacourt, de Forcalquier, and Du Barry; the Prince de Soubise, the Dukes de Richelieu, d'Aiguillon, de Cossé, de Noailles, and de

Duras. Amusement was the order of the evening; every body laughed incessantly; but death had already taken his place at the banquet. The king quitted it about midnight, in order to keep his assignation with the young beauty, who was prepared to receive him.

The next day he complained of being indisposed; the small-pox was already beginning to exhibit its most alarming symptoms on his person. He had been inoculated by the young lady, who had herself the germs of the disorder in her system, without being aware of it. Bordeu, the Duchess Du Barry's confidential physician, was called in, in default of Quesnay, the first physician in ordinary, who had desisted from practice on account of his great age, and of De Monnier, who was his *ad interim* substitute, but who did not possess the confidence of the favourite. Bordeu, gained over by her, gave out that the king's malady was not serious, and that he saw no necessity to convey him to

Versailles. This was a grand object with the countess and her cabal, who saw the importance of not allowing my grandfather to fall into other hands than theirs, and especially to prevent the possibility of a relapse into religious impressions.

But La Martinière, whom the king had ordered to be called in from the first attack, marred the whole plan, in declaring that no time should be lost in conveying the patient to Versailles. It was known how useless it was to temporize with his determination, and it was necessary to submit to the decision with as good a grace as possible.

Louis XV. was as docile as a child in the hands of his confidential surgeon; and notwithstanding his fears of displeasing the favourite, he consented to quit Trianon.

The king was scarcely gone when we knew that he was dangerously ill. Every one then began to look about him, and turn over in his

mind what he had to gain or lose by the approaching catastrophe. The court changed its aspect in an instant, and a vague expression of fear or hope was visible on every countenance. The Dauphiness passed a great part of the night in conference with her intimate friends. I knew from an individual, who apprized me of the slightest events which transpired at Marie-Antoinette's, that the Abbé de Vermont did not go to bed till after he had occupied several successive hours in writing, and had personally gone to convey his despatches to the Count de Mercy-Argenteau, the Empress Maria-Theresa's ambassador.

I had no chance of ascending the throne, and yet I had that evening more company than usual in my drawing-room. Even the Count d'Artois, who was generally neglected because he was thought in small credit, found himself that evening the focus of numerous calls of respect. The Prince de Beauvau found an opportunity,

in the midst of the general bustle, to see me a moment on the subject of the Duke de Choiseul. I experienced a real pleasure in showing him my brother's letter; it threw him into a perfect consternation, but not to that degree as to deprive him of all hope, so much did he reckon on the influence of the Dauphiness.

The nature of the king's disorder was at first concealed, but the report soon spread that he was attacked by the small-pox. As soon as they understood him to be dangerously ill, my aunts hastened to their father, and never once quitted him till his death, notwithstanding the greatest efforts were made to prevent their determination. Their conduct on this occasion was above all praise; they in some sort excluded from my grandfather's chamber the favourite, who was only able to make her appearance by stealth, when my aunts were induced, under some pretext or another, to retire into an adjoining ante-chamber.

The next morning, Le Monnier, Bordeu, La Martinière, and the other physicians of the king, held a consultation in presence of the Duke de Duras. La Martinière, with his usual rough candour, made no hesitation in saying that the king had the small-pox, and that he had no chance of surviving. All his professional brethren, who till then held back, concurred; it was, however, resolved to preserve the strictest secrecy as to the results of the consultation.

The Duke de Duras, who was alarmed by the degree of responsibility which rested on his shoulders, was anxious to diminish the burden by sharing it with the first person he could find so disposed. His good star caused the Count de Mui to be that day at Versailles. All who knew that estimable man have preserved a vivid recollection of his worth, which made ample compensation for the inferiority of his talent. Directed by steady principles, he was

distinguished by great disinterestedness and true nobility of mind, and imbued with a sterling piety, which was not content with any exterior display of it short of good works. His conversation was grave, but pleasing: his severity was feared, although he never exhibited it; but his reputation of a virtuous man was so well established, that those who had an internal self-accuser could not be perfectly at ease in his society.

It was impossible for the poor Duke de Duras to address himself to a better individual. He confided to him the king's imminent peril, and requested his advice how to act in the conjuncture. M. de Muy's instant reply was, that the last sacrament should be administered to the king without the least delay. The duke, alarmed at the idea of taking on himself such a commission, endeavoured to dispute the necessity; but M. de Muy replied in such a manner as to close his lips at once; and then

quitted him to announce to the Dauphin the situation of our grandfather.

My elder brother, although the most interested in what was going on, was the last of the family to occupy himself with the results. Far from manifesting the least joy, he thought of nothing but the loss he was about to sustain, and his excellent heart caused him to burst into tears. The courtiers who were about his person had the *naïveté* to express their astonishment at this. It was found necessary to send for the Dauphiness to console him; she urged the propriety and duty of resignation, and at last succeeded in appeasing the first transports of his sorrow.

The Count de Muy then waited on me, in order to complete his mission. I was prepared for its purport, for I had been apprized by a confidential person of the opinion of the physicians. I expected M. de Muy to say something on the subject of the present and future

condition of the court ; but he confined himself to reiterating the necessity of administering the last sacrament to the king without loss of time. I could not, however, help admiring the disinterestedness of this worthy man, who thought of nothing but the king's eternal welfare, while every body else in the same sphere, was only thinking of turning the event of his death to account.

CHAPTER XV.

Various scenes which passed while the King was lying on his death-bed—The Archbishop of Paris—The Bishops of Senlis, Meaux, and Gap—The ball thrown from one to the other—The Chancellor requests a secret audience of the Count de Provence—The subject of it—The dismissal of the favourite—Noble expressions of the Dauphiness—The King confesses himself—Attempts are made to impose a director on the future monarch—Madame Victoire and M. de Machault.

THE Duke de Duras struggled ineffectually to disburthen himself of the weight of his responsibility. If on the one hand he feared the displeasure of the king, should he recover; on the other hand he had to anticipate the indignation of the Dauphin and the upper clergy if he

allowed him to die without religious assistance. He accordingly sent messengers to the ministers, and a courier to Madame Louise, whom the eternal safety of her father most interested, as well as to the Archbishop of Paris and the cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, who were at that moment at Paris.

As soon as the Count de Muy quitted me I went to the Dauphin, whom I found very melancholy. He appeared to be comforted with my society, and that of my wife and the Count and Countess d'Artois ; and we shut ourselves up together, admitting only a few intimates who were destined to play important parts in the new reign ; the Duke de Coigni, the Count de Modène, the Marquis de Montesquiou, and the Princess de Lamballe, with the ladies in waiting of the Dauphiness, constituted our sole society up to the time of the death of the king.

The grand almoner was the first to answer the Duke de Duras' message ; but like an ex-

pert courtier, rather than a churchman, he sought to evade the difficulty of the position ; and feigning a sudden indisposition, he took his place in an easy chair, where he remained till the arrival of the Archbishop of Paris. The latter, like a true successor of the apostles, came immediately on receiving the message, although he was afflicted with a strangury which caused him the greatest pain ; and made his appearance at Versailles at a moment when he was generally understood to be under the hands of his surgeon. The Bishops de Meaux, chief almoner of Madame Adelaide, De Gap, and De Senlis, followed. The Bishop de Senlis, M. de Roquelaure, was one of the most agreeable of men ; vivacious, occasionally gallant, replete with gaiety and light-heartedness, he had discovered a method of making himself popular with all the parties who divided the court. The king took pleasure in his gentle piety, which never indulged in tormenting

the minds of others. He conversed with him very readily, and admitted him to a private intimacy, which the worthy prelate was unwilling to lose by putting himself too forward in an affair, which did not much concern his province. The Bishop de Meaux passed for a man of regular conduct in public; but there were sly observers wicked enough to say, that he made himself private amends for his public self-denial. The Bishop de Gap, M. de Narbonne-Lara, was rather a grand signor than a humble churchman. He was a fine man, very much in the odour of sanctity with our ancient dowagers, and much more occupied with the care of his temporal advancement, than anxious about his eternal welfare. Such was the venerable council, invested with the duty of providing for my grandfather's salvation. The Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon subsequently joined it; he arrived hobbling, as if incapable of supporting himself, and making the drollest

contortions of countenance, in order to sustain the farce of pretended indisposition. He was, nevertheless, to his great dismay, chosen to announce to the king the necessity of confessing himself. He exerted himself to the utmost to evade this decision ; but finding that the Archbishop of Paris was determined, he took on himself to recommend that they should first consult the Dauphin.

On this memorable occasion my brother discovered all the usual indecision of his character ; he coloured, he stammered, when the holy personages consulted him, and was, after all, incapable of coming to any resolution.

The question, therefore, remained just where it was before he was consulted. As for me, I resolved to remain dumb, taking care not to take on myself a responsibility which all the world were anxious to escape. Luckily I had no obligation to fill one way or the other ; and I was not the man to create myself one, the consequences of

which might one day or other give me a great deal of trouble.

The bishops then reverted to my aunts; the ball was thus bandied from hand to hand; and while the precious time was thus wasted, it was not improbable that the soul of the eldest son of the church might have been carried off by Satan, to the general scandal of Christendom.

In short, the council was near breaking up without coming to any result, when a lucky thought suggested the Abbé Madoux, the king's confessor, a personage who pushed his toleration to the extreme towards his royal penitent. It was unanimously decided that he should be invested with the painful duty which none of his superiors were willing to discharge, and M. de Beaumont, after having sufficiently catechized and primed him with instructions how far to go, sent him to the illustrious invalid.

Meanwhile, retiring into my apartment with Modène and Montesquiou, we indulged our

conjectures as to the future ; and they imagined a grand *rôle* for my future performance, simply because they wished it. While this was passing, I received a note from the chancellor, soliciting a secret interview the same evening on business, as he stated, of the highest importance. I repressed all outward exhibition of curiosity which might have put my two courtiers on the scent, and found means by a circuitous channel, to apprize the chancellor that I should comply with his request. I must confess, the message excited all my curiosity. What could he have to communicate ? Was it a revelation concerning the past or the future ? However, notwithstanding my curiosity, I continued chatting with Modène and Montesquiou up till my usual hour of retiring to bed. As soon as they were gone, I proceeded to the little parlour where the chancellor was to pay me his furtive visit. He was not long before he made his appearance ; the valet, who was in the secret,

ushered him in to me disguised in so strange a dress, that on any other occasion I should have burst out a laughing.

After beginning with the usual compliments, he expressed his anxiety as to the measures of government which the Dauphin would pursue. I replied in general terms; adding, that I reposed the utmost confidence in the wisdom of my brother, and that as far as regarded myself, I was for the new order of things.

However reserved I might be, on the whole I had never before been so explicit, and I thought the chancellor, in consequence, would have embraced me in a transport of joy; as it was, his complexion, which was naturally a mixture of pale and sallow, became quite purple with the emotion of pleasure he felt. In return, he assured me, that if the new king should pursue any other line of policy, he would ruin the monarchy, the cashiered parliamentarians

having come to a resolution to resume authority to the detriment of the throne by inviting the states general to share it with them. That, moreover, it was their intention to pave the way for a constitution resembling the English, in which the parliamentary councillors should be substituted for a House of Lords, and a House of Commons constituted by means of elections established in the various municipalities, (corporations.)

The chancellor supported these allegations by plausible arguments; and afterwards indicated to me by name, the principal concocters of this intrigue, and their ramifications in the provinces. He afterwards spoke of his sworn enemy in terms of so little moderation, that I was alarmed; for he did not hesitate to charge him with a triple crime of which I was the victim. I was struck dumb with these revelations, of which he furnished me the proofs, or pretended proofs. I was not, however, convinced: I was

led by the suspicions with which he imbued me, to make investigations subsequently, which I cannot and will not specify. It is a subject from which great reasons of state debar me from speaking openly. Perhaps I have already dropped too much.

I slept little; and my people, according to my instructions, came to inform me every two hours of the king's condition. It was become more difficult than ever to approach his majesty. The Duke de Richelieu taking advantage of the extreme indecision of the Duke de Duras invested himself with the *haute police* of the invalid's bed-chamber, and suffered none to enter but such as he pleased. He accordingly manœuvred with so much address, that even my aunts, although they had an official function to execute by their father's bed-side, were not enabled to exchange a word with him, except in the presence of a third person, who was a spy of De Richelieu's.

But all the marshal's ingenious trouble came to nothing. All his precautions could not exclude the most dangerous of his antagonists, La Martinière; and he, piquing himself on his loyalty, less a courtier than a physician, was incapable of telling the king an untruth in answer to a question. In fact, as soon as Louis XV. made the inquiry, he unscrupulously replied that his disorder was the small-pox. The king, then, immediately prepared for death. His first order was to forbid his grandsons, not only entrance to his chamber, but even all that part of the castle in which it was situated. He refused to give his signature to any public acts; forbade all reference to public affairs, and calling his daughters to him, announced to them in a sorrowful tone his approaching decease.

My aunts burst into tears; and Madame Adelaide afterwards read to the king a letter from Madame Louise. His majesty was with difficulty able to bear the lecture of it, so com-

completely were his moral powers exhausted, since he was rendered aware of his exact condition. However, he once more saw Madame Du Barry, though he was not long in convincing her that her reign was over, by his speech to the Duke d'Aiguillon.

“ I have not forgotten the scene at Metz, and I should be grieved to see it re-enacted at Versailles. You will therefore tell the Duchess d'Aiguillon, that she will oblige me by accompanying the Countess Du Barry to Ruel.”

This was a regular congé in form ; and great joy was occasioned by it at the palace. The departure of this unhappy woman caused greater sensation than the approaching death of the king. The Choiseuls were in an ecstasy. More than a hundred voices were raised to induce the Dauphiness to be revenged on her now that she had the power : but I am bound to render Marie-Antoinette this justice, that so far from yielding to this advice, she replied with a dig-

nified tone, "The Countess Du Barry has wished to compete with me; but I shall never humiliate myself to enter into any competition with her. She will soon suffer punishment enough in her change of fortune and isolation: the queen of France will have other occupation."

The Dauphiness kept her word. She conducted herself towards the ex-favourite with a magnanimity which displeased the cabal, and which they had the infamy to impute to her as a crime. Madame Du Barry departed in the night between the 4th and 5th of May.

The king lingered through the alternations of better and worse, till the 10th following instant, when all hope was at an end. On Monday, the 8th, in the morning, he himself requested to see his confessor, and subsequently desired to receive the sacrament. We knew from this fact, that Louis XV. was convinced that his kingdom was no longer of this world,

and that it was necessary to prepare for an immediate separation. This ceremony was performed with the usual solemnity. The grand almoner, no longer afraid of the king's displeasure, lost all traces of indisposition, and officiated *in pontificalibus*. He had, however, one little embarrassment. It was the king's reparation, by public confession, of a rather irregular life: but he extricated himself from the difficulty with great adroitness. At the moment of giving the communion to the king, he said to the bystanders, who had followed the clergy in great numbers to the foot of the royal bed—"Gentlemen, the king's indisposition preventing him from addressing you, he orders me to say that although he is only responsible to God for his conduct, he deploras having giving cause of scandal to his people; that he repents his sins with sincere contrition; and that if Providence should prolong his life, he will devote it to the good of his people and the support of religion."

This pious address produced its full effect. No one doubted that all the irregularity of the king's life was effaced by these words, and that he could thenceforwards present himself, without fear, before the throne of heaven.

From that moment, nobody gave an additional thought to the dying king : and all were anxious to quit the monarch from whom no farther advantage was to be derived, to pay court to his successor, who was about to become the great dispenser of earthly benefits.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Dukes d'Aiguillon and La Vrillière cabal, in despair of their own cause, in favour of M. de Maurepas—The Marquis de Pezay—The Count de Maurepas—The reason why Madame Adelaide declares in his favour—Death of Louis XV.—Journey to Choisy—Joy of the people—Change of Policy—Friends of the Queen—The intrigues of the Choiseuls are defeated—M. de Maurepas Minister—Louis XVI.'s Letter to him—Madame de Maurepas.

WHILE my grandfather was in the agonies of death, the party which governed in his name, determined to take advantage of their transient power, and strained every nerve to obviate their approaching fall. This cabal surrounded the royal family with a net which it could neither

break nor perceive. Madame Victoire, the king's daughter, thought to open a secret correspondence with the Dauphin, in which she proposed for his premier, M. de Machault, whom she regarded as a trustworthy and able man. But before her letters reached him, they were dexterously unsealed and submitted to the Dukes d'Aiguillon, de Richelieu, and St. Florentine, a trio, who were, at this moment, inseparable allies.

These gentlemen, trembled at the incorruptible integrity of M. de Machault. They knew it was useless to attempt alluring him or deluding him ; and they resolved therefore to keep him at a distance, at any price. Supplying a kind of antithesis to M. de Machault, there was another old statesman, born in the same year, who, although in the decline of life, retained all the frivolity of youth. The Count de Maurepas, who had been a minister under Louis XV., was quite incapable of any enlarged ideas ; he was superficial to the highest degree ; investing

the structure of a couplet with as much importance as an affair of state. He was an admirer of bon-mots, and thought to make amends for all defects by the aid of an apposite repartee. He had much more anxiety to give an agreeable *petit souper* than to govern France well; and his government partook, in its march, of the nature of his caprices. Such was the man whom the Duke de la Vrillière, who was connected with him by ties of relationship, as well as the Duke D'Aiguillon, meditated placing at the head of affairs, anticipating to rule in his name, by the intervention of his wife, who was unable to refuse them any thing they asked.

This ex-minister, who had been exiled for some offence to Madame du Pompadour, lived on his estate at Port Chartrain, about eighteen miles from Versailles, a distance which enabled some of the court to visit him without giving umbrage to the king. It was easy, therefore,

for the triumvirate to open a correspondence with him, and they did this through the medium of a man of straw, whose subsequent prosperity excited general surprise—I refer to M. de Pezay de Masson, on whom the following epigram was made about that time.

“ Ce jeune homme a beaucoup acquis,
Beaucoup acquis, je vous assure;
Car en deux ans, et malgré la nature,
Il s'est fait poète et marquis.”

M. de Pezay, who was sprung of a banking family, although still young, was old in the practices of intrigue. He had had the address to foist himself into good company, and even to establish himself at court. This personage the Duke de la Vrillière pitched on to go to M. de Maurepas, and induce him to write to Madame Victoire an offer of his services to the Dauphin.

The long exile from court of M. de Maurepas had not added to his wisdom. My aunt

Adelaide was greatly attached to him: they were in regular correspondence: she often asked his advice, and he in giving it, did not fail to mix it up with a farrago of epigrams, *bon-mots* and caricatures, to which he attached considerably more importance than my aunt did.

Another contrivance to clear the way of M. de Machault was brought into play. During his ministry, he had exerted himself to reform the morals of the upper clergy, and to repress their ambition. On this hint, they proceeded to paint him to the Dauphin as an atheist, whose object was to overthrow all religion. The grand almoner, to whom my brother was much attached, as well as the Bishop of Senlis, to whom he had become reconciled, laboured to make him believe this calumny, and they succeeded so well, that the dangerous rival was completely beaten out of the field.

M. de Pezay did nothing but pass and repass between Pont Chartrain and Versailles from the

7th to the 9th of May, travelling under various disguises, in order to elude suspicion, and not even reposing during the night. Meanwhile, the dying agony of the king lasted till Tuesday the 10th of May, 1774, when he expired, at three in the morning. The royal family had privately resolved to quit Versailles together, immediately on his death, and to pass the first days of mourning at Choisy, where we hoped to be more to ourselves.

It was agreed between some of the individuals of our establishment, and those belonging to the king, to extinguish a wax candle which stood in a window of the royal chamber, and which could be seen from the Dauphin's window, as an indication of the exact moment of his death. This order was executed, and the announcement was directly made to the Dauphin, that he was king of France, under the title of Louis XVI.

It was a great disappointment to those who

flattered themselves with bringing him the first news of his accession, to find him already aware of it. We, however, were visible to few persons, and the carriages being ready, we departed at day-break—the king, queen, myself, my wife, and the Count and Countess d'Artois,—without etiquette, and unaccompanied. Louis XVI. was disposed to shed tears, and the Count d'Artois would readily have followed his example; but his wife let drop so droll an *equivoque*, set off to greater advantage by her Piedmontese brogue, that it was perfectly irresistible, and we all burst into a hearty laugh. By the time we arrived at Choisy we were tolerably reconciled to the change of circumstances; we chatted without restraint, and the king, my brother, appeared delighted, to think that during nine days he should not be annoyed with the visit of a minister, or troubled with public affairs.

In ascending the throne, Louis XVI. had the welfare of his people sincerely at heart, but the

unhappy indecision of his character rendered him accessible to the predominance of any intriguer: the consequence was, that the march of public measures was never for one moment steady, up to the time when the state vessel went to pieces on the rocks. Besides the pernicious results of the secret influence of the court of Vienna, directed by the Abbe de Vermont, a counsel composed of the most incapable persons managed the helm. The court, which was accustomed to the mysterious gravity of our grandfather's politics, were astonished at the establishment of an entirely new order of things.

The state secret became as stale as that of a comedy. I complained of this want of sedateness and reserve, but I was not listened to; and cabals were set on foot against me. The leaders of these rattlebrains, who were urging every thing, without intending it, to ruin, were the Count d'Artois, whose years of youthful indiscretion seemed prolonged beyond the usual

bounds; the Baron de Besenval, a sort of grey-headed Celadon, with no brains; but impressed with the most favourable idea of his immense capacity; the Duke de Coigni, who was too much of a wit to be reasonable, and out of whom the restoration strained a point to get up a hero, in default of any body else; the Chevalier, his brother, the very essence of frivolity; the Count d'Adhémar, a boudoir diplomatist; the handsome Vaudreuil, ludicrously stupid, and who, at all events, did every thing for his family, though he could do nothing for the state; finally, the Duchess, Duke, Count, Marquis, Viscount, and Baron de Polignac, a fatally numerous family to Marie-Antoinette; the Princess de Lamballe, so fatally punished for wishing to swim with the stream; M. de Calonne, whose influence dates from a remoter period than is generally believed; and M. de Maurepas, whose age had added nothing to the steadiness of his judgment. It is to this latter

vain and superficial statesman that we are indebted for the fatal progress of affairs, and the destruction of my brother, who reposed implicit confidence in him. On arriving at Choisy, the queen made one more effort in favour of De Choiseul, but being rudely repulsed by the king; she wept, and pettishly protested that she would never mention his name again. All obstacles being thus removed out of M. de Maurepas' way, the choice was definitively fixed, and the king's decision made known to him by a note in his own handwriting, dated the 11th of May, in which he said, that "fully sensible of the great duty that had devolved on him, he stood in need of an enlightened guide; and was convinced that he should find one in him."

It was remarked on this occasion by the Count de Montesquiou, with some truth, that this letter ought to have been addressed to the Countess de Maurepas rather than her husband,

to Choisy. His appearance caused a general surprise. The mob of courtiers, who expected the Duke de Choiseul, were completely thrown off the true scent; but they contrived to preserve appearances, and affected great joy, in order the more effectually to conceal their mortification. The queen, above all, commanded her feelings with full effect. She saw the hopes of four years vanish in an instant; but she knew how to act with dignity; she therefore received M. de Maurepas very graciously—so much so, that he might have been deceived by the reception, had he not possessed good information of what had previously passed. But, nevertheless, he was not behindhand with the young queen, and calling to his aid all the gallantry of his younger days, he protested a boundless devotion and obedience to her commands. The count assumed a graver air in his conference with the king; he endeavoured to alarm him as to the multiplicity and difficulty of affairs, in order

that he might abandon the entire direction of them to him. In this he succeeded; for the monarch, whose modesty was founded on want of confidence in himself, made no delay in apprizing all the subordinate ministers that, previous to submitting their labours to him, they must communicate with M. de Maurepas. This was giving him a supremacy over his colleagues which he was incapable of sustaining with adequate effect.

The queen sought some equivalent for the failure of her favourite scheme; in obtaining the dismissal of two other ministers she disliked,—the Dukes d' Aiguillon and De la Vrillière; but the count's ascendancy began already to appear. He reflected that he partly owed his elevation to their agency, and persuaded the king that it would be impolitic to dismiss these two ministers of the late king at this particular conjuncture, when public opinion was pronouncing itself with so much acrimony and in-

justice against the memory of that prince. My brother did not insist, and proceeded to relate the conversation to Marie-Antoinette, who thought it prudent to remain silent for the present, though resolved to recover the empire over her husband which appeared on the point of escaping from her hands; and meanwhile she treated the two Dukes with marked coldness.

The Duke de la Vrillière ill brooked the idea of a disgrace, for which the long favour he had enjoyed under Louis XV. had not prepared him. He was a singular mixture of suppleness and pride: it might be said, that when he humbled himself it was proudly; but in other respects, he was so adroit, and knew how to make himself occasionally so agreeable, that although the king and queen looked on him with an unfavourable eye, he succeeded in inducing them at least to put up with his presence, which was for him a great point gained.

He might therefore indulge to a certain degree in the pleasant illusion, that he still retained credit at court.

I did not see him often. His character was not calculated to win my esteem; but I could not avoid sometimes laughing at his bon-mots and fanfarronades. I took him for what he was worth, and amused myself with him, and nothing more.

He was one of those most vexed with the minister's elevation; he had had some hand in his former fall, and expected he might make reprisals on him.

But he knew little of the count, whose character was too thoughtless to retain resentment for so many years; he thought too much of living for the present, to think of the past. Far from exhibiting any gall or acrimony against any body, his object was to please every body; not by direct services, but by letting them act as they pleased. This was a line of

conduct he never lost sight of. "Let the water run under the bridge," was his favourite device.

Our aunt Victoire knew him better than any body, and when the king apologized to her for not accepting the minister she had recommended, she replied with animation—"I know what M. de Machault *would have* done, but I do not see what M. de Maurepas *can* do."

Meanwhile, cabals were set on foot to obtain the favour of the new premier. There was a gentleman of my establishment destined one day to monopolize a large share of it; this was the Marquis, since become Prince de Montbarrey—an individual singularly adapted for intrigue, and who, although endowed with very mediocre talent, pushed his fortune very far. He was pride personified. He looked on himself as a phoenix, and made himself amends by his own admiration for the little effect he produced on others. He easily obtained patronage in

the establishment of M. de Maurepas, where, by becoming the *protégé* of the wife, he was soon enabled to lord it over the husband. I was not sorry for this, since it was introducing my foot into the minister's house in the person of my servant; and I often turned the acquisition to good account.

On the other hand, much anxiety was expressed to see on whom the queen's friendship would be bestowed, and the question was not long in being solved; for the Princess de Lamballe shortly became her intimate friend, the confidential depository of all her secrets. Her chance was excellent, and might have conducted another Duchess de Chevreuse or Princess d'Ursins to the height of fortune, but the materials for making a favourite were deficient. Madame de Lamballe, with small talent and no ambition, was incapable of turning her position to the best account; she had scarcely the proper energy to repay kindness with kindness,

and concluded by chilling the friendship of the queen into indifference.

The terrible end of the Princess de Lamballe ought no doubt to create a regretful respect for her memory. Nevertheless, I cannot, as a true historian, excuse myself from exhibiting by the side of her brighter qualities some of the defects which go to complete the shadows of the picture. While I am fully sensible of her good heart, her elegance, and the noble elevation of her soul, her benevolence and affability, I am bound to say that she committed errors herself, and caused the queen to commit them. She was one of the first to inspire the latter with that aversion to etiquette, and that taste for frivolous pleasure, which are so prejudicial to a queen. Madame de Lamballe, who was older than Marie-Antoinette, ought to have directed her by prudent advice, instead of encouraging her caprices. This conduct, which would have raised her much higher in public

estimation, would have also enabled her to have more securely preserved the queen's confidence, which she permitted to be withdrawn from her by her own weakness in augmenting the number of her intimate friends. But previously to this result, it was deemed requisite to create some eminent function for the august friend of Marie-Antoinette, and she was accordingly named superintendent of the queen's establishment, who thus increased its expenses, without much troubling herself about the means of supplying them.

The division of the spoils of the Duke d'Aiguillon took place on the 6th of June, 1774; the dismissal of that minister having been signified to him on the 2nd. The portfolio of foreign affairs passed into the hands of the Count de Vergennes, at that time ambassador to Sweden. The department of war was given to Count du Muy. Both these nominations were approved. I have already introduced

M. de Mui to the reader : I may now say a word of M. de Vergennes. He was a man of honour, of not very high birth, without much talent ; but entirely devoted to the Bourbon family.

These two ministers were worthy of the popularity they enjoyed ; but their provisional colleagues were in no way to be compared to them, although I am far from confounding in the same sweeping censure the chancellor, to whom might apply the description which Figaro applies to himself, that "he was a great deal better than he was thought to be."

This double appointment was a thunderstroke to M. de Choiseul. He had, up to that moment, flattered himself with the hope that the vanity of M. de Maurepas would prompt him to commit the error of taking possession of a department himself, which, by rendering his incapacity manifest, would prepare the way for his subsequent fall ; but the wily old courtier

had too much tact to be caught in such a snare. He refused all the king offered, even the foreign department, and thus concealed, under a feigned modesty, his real deficiency of talent.

The Duke de Choiseul's rage no longer knew any bounds. He appealed to heaven and hell; accused the queen of weakness, his friends of ingratitude, and the king of prejudice. However, as a small compensation for the frustration of his brilliant hopes, he was persuaded to pay his court at Versailles, where he arrived full of pompous elation and pretension, followed by a troop of partizans or neutrals, who were curious to witness what would be the reception of the fallen star.

That of the queen was as gracious as could be expected; but the king displayed a marked coldness. On the morning, indeed, of his arrival, his majesty said to me, "We shall have a visit from our *Olibrius* to-day. I know he basks himself up with hopes; but I shall take

care to receive him in such a manner as will at once, and for all, put an end to them. I will have no one attached to my person whom I cannot esteem."

In short, the Duke, after having an interview with the king, retired with rage in his heart. He saw at a glance how difficult it would be for Marie-Antoinette to change the king's prejudices against him; and the result was, that his party conceived a pique against her, and in some sort became her opponents. My sister-in-law was hardly seated on the throne, when there was formed against her a cabal of malcontents, enemies, and intriguers, whose animosity time continually increased.

It might have been surmised at first, that this animosity against the queen was only the tittle-tattle of the court. The dowagers of the preceding reign had imputed her levities and occasional jokes to her as crimes; she was accused of having laughed at the expense of Madame

de Mortan, while her back was turned ; that she had given the nickname of *everlasting* to a lady of only thirty-six ; and that, on the day when the court dowagers had come to pay their court to her in all the ceremonious pomp of hoops and farthingales, she had been obliged to bite her lips, in order to prevent a fit of laughter at the sight of these venerable ladies : a crime in their eyes unpardonable in a queen of eighteen.

These puerile complaints assumed a form of more serious consistency when the Richelieus the Rohans, and all the connexions of the half-disgraced families were joined by the barkers of the Choiseul cabal. The queen increased their ill-humour in choosing a select society of intimate friends, from which they were excluded. Every body made their exclusion a ground for being censorious. She had detractors in all whom she did not distinguish by particular favours--the smallest imprudences were imputed to her

as crimes; and at last even her most innocent affections were calumniated. Unfortunately this unpopularity at last extended from the court to the city; and the most silly reports of her conduct found an echo in the salons of the noblesse first, and then another in the back parlours of the shopkeepers.

Besides the ministerial intrigues, a great political battle was on the point of being fought, which would decide the restoration of the ancient magistracy or consolidate the new. M. de Maurepas, who was determined to revive the extinct body, was not yet however quite prepared for so important an undertaking. The chancellor could not avoid entertaining fears, which he expressed to me by word and by writing; and I received a letter from him in the early part of the following July, some of the expressions of which appear to me worthy of preserving. He said he had good knowledge that the private counsel of the queen, the Prin-

cess de Lamballe, the Countess de Grammont, the Marchioness d'Adhémar, and others, had a long conference with her on the subject of recalling the ex-parliaments, and that her majesty had said that M. de Maurepas had promised that recall to her as a new year's gift (her *etrennes*;) that "he had waited on the premier for an explanation, who, instead of giving him any answer, had begun humming the new political ballad of Collé;" that he trusted that I would have the goodness to see M. de Maurepas, for the purpose of opening his eyes to the danger of the measure he was meditating: for if the old parliaments, said he, are recalled, their whole object will be to consolidate and augment their power; to take vengeance of their adversaries; and they will tyrannize over the government that restores them, with little regard or gratitude for the favour it bestows on them."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Policy of the Count de Provence.—He visits M. de Mau-
 repas, who sings Collé's new song to him.—Futile con-
 versation.—The Count de Provence confers with the
 King on the subject of the recall of the Parliaments.—
 Arrogance of the ancient Parliamentarians.—Accurate
 foresight of the Chancellor.—The Duke d'Orleans quar-
 rels with the Court.—Popular reception of the Count
 de Provence, distinguished from that of the Count
 d'Artois.—Kind-heartedness of Louis XVI.—His gra-
 cious manner of bestowing Petit Trianon on the Queen
 —The manner in which she receives the present.

I HAD pledged myself, at the commencement
 of the new reign, to conform, in my political
 views, to the line of policy adopted by my bro-
 ther, and I subsequently explained to him the

full extent of this concurrence, by saying that where he placed his foot I would place mine ; but at the same time I reserved to myself the right of commenting on the measures he was about to pursue, in order that I might have nothing with which to reproach myself, either in my quality of brother or first subject of the state. When I myself ascended the throne, I required the same modified concurrence from my brother, and I trust, at least, that I never required from him more than I had myself conceded in the same situation.

But before addressing myself to the king on the subject of the parliaments, I wished first to ascertain exactly the intentions of M. de Maurepas ; for notwithstanding my rank, I was not made acquainted with any of the state secrets by direct means ; not sitting at the council table, I learnt nothing except by stealth, or by drawing out the communicative indiscretion of others.

The queen preserved a rigorous silence in these matters towards me; the king was not more communicative: and nevertheless I was under the necessity of dissembling my ignorance to the courtiers, in order to avoid being let down in their opinion of my importance.

It may be said that I am a stickler for etiquette; and to say the truth, I do consider it necessary to the maintenance of high rank. I can nevertheless set myself free from its restraints when I think it expedient for the interest of the state or myself. For example, I found it indispensable to lay it aside, if I meant to obtain any credit with M. de Maurepas. I had therefore made it a point of custom to visit him unceremoniously, at such times as I thought him least occupied; imitating the conduct of the king in this respect, who went up to his room at all hours; for at Versailles his apartment was directly situated over that of Louis XVI.

Though well stricken in years, this minister had the mania of wanting to please every body. This mania is an agreeable one, beyond a doubt; but in political life it is a perfect madness. My attentions seemed to flatter him; I pretended to feel a great confidence in his advice; we chatted together about the arts, of which he knew next to nothing, and of literature, with which he had but a shallow acquaintance. We then exhibited our knowledge of science, and recited from memory; and I am bound to say that I was not the weakest in the display. He sometimes also sung to me, in a piping broken voice, the political ballads composed from the æra of the Fronde down to our time; and I, in return, recited passages from our best ancient and modern masters. In short, he was obviously pleased with our correspondence, to which however I avoided imparting too intimate a character, in order to avoid exciting suspicion.

The minister was not, therefore, much sur-

prised when I unceremoniously entered his chamber, after receiving the chancellor's letter. We chatted at first about different things: of the Duchess de Grammont among others, who was near dying for joy on hearing of the recent great changes in the state, although in the long run she had not much occasion to rejoice at them. In my turn, I was by complaisance compelled to listen to his favourite *chanson* of Collé, which I feel a pleasure in transcribing here, as a specimen of the style of opposition in which the literary men of that juncture indulged:

Or, écoutez, petits et grands,
L'histoire d'un roi de vingt ans,
Qui va nous ramener en France
Les bonnes mœurs et l'abondance.
D'après ce plan que deviendront
Et les catins et les fripons?

S'il veut de l'honneur et des mœurs,
Que deviendront nos grands seigneurs?

S'il aime les honnêtes femmes,
Que deviendront nos belles dames ?
S'il bannit les gens dérégles,
Que feront nos riches abbés ?

S'il dédaigne un frivole encens,
Que deviendront les courtisans ?
Que feront les amis du prince,
Autrement nommés en province ?
Si ses sujets sont ses enfans,
Que deviendront les partisans ?

S'il veut qu'un prélat soit chrétien,
Un magistrat homme de bien,
Combien de juges mercenaires,
D'évêques et de grands vicaires,
Vont changer de conduite, *amen* ;
Domine salvum fac regem.

"Is it possible to give more sting and malice to poetry ?" said M. de Maurepas, at the end of each couplet. "This charming ballad cannot be made too public in France."

"The rather," said I, "because its optimism offers redress for every thing. Mazarin would

have said rightly now-a-days, as in the time of the Fronde, *Cantoun, cantoun pagarum*."

"Yes, monseigneur; for when our politicians sing they work openly—I should fear them if they were silent."

"Then you need not fear them much now, for their vein seems inexhaustible."

"They have suffered so much under the *ancien régime*."

"And they amply repay themselves under the new. I only trust that they will not be allowed more swing than they have now got."

"There is, however, much to be done," said M. de Maurepas, shrugging and pinkering through his eyes, according to his habit when he had any thing important to talk about; a habit, by the way, which imparted to the worthy minister a very ninnyish air, while he flattered himself he was exciting respect by this affected appearance of falling back on his high thoughts. "Yes," pursued he, "I repeat that there is

much to do. The reign of Louis XVI. ought to be made a new æra of public happiness."

"The way to render it so, M. le Comte, is to consolidate existing institutions."

"You touch a thorny subject, monseigneur. We must not come into collision with public opinion."

"The king, then, intends to subvert the work of Louis XV., of which we cannot boast too much."

"You must perceive, monseigneur, that the magistracy enjoys no consideration; and, between ourselves, it deserves none."

"You are aware, M. le Comte, that beginnings are always difficult; and your judgment appears to me a little too severe. In order to entertain a just estimate of the merits or demerits of the new magistracy, it requires time to make itself known by its works."

"I fear that this new bantling of the chancellor is destined to remain a tedious time in its

infancy, if indeed it ever reach an age of discretion; and that before we can enjoy the fruits of its discretion we must put up with all the follies of its immaturity: God knows if the latter will not see us out."

In these last words I recognized the egotism of an old man, who cared for nothing beyond his own time; and felt more interest in the present than succeeding generations. I inferred at the same time, that the same self-love would prompt him to destroy the labours of a wise policy, in order to earn the ease and applause of a transitory popularity. Therefore, not considering the moment favourable for a *visa* *versus* confutation of his opinions, I contented myself with saying, "I have a memorial, monsieur, digested by me on this subject, which I wish to submit to my brother; but previous to doing so, I should be glad of your opinion on it." He told me that he would frankly give me his opinion, adding with a feigned modesty, by

which I was not doped, that it would be always satisfactory to him to be enlightened by my information.

I promised the minister to take him the memorial the next day, for I had already prepared it from the materials of my own notes, as well as the documents supplied me by the chancellor. This memorial, which was comprised in sixteen pages folio, I wrote entirely with my own hand, not being willing to confide the task of copying it to another person. I regret that I cannot insert it here; but it was mislaid before the Revolution, or perhaps purloined by some amateurs of state secrets, with the intention of printing it after my death. Should that be the case, and should it ever be subjected to the public eye, I can certify its authenticity beforehand.

I did not fail to return next day with my memorial to the minister, who read it over with me, affected to be in an ecstasy at the force and

depth of my views, and promised to recommend my work to the king's especial notice. In effect, having gone to pay a visit to my brother two days after, I seized the opportunity when no witnesses were by, to say, that understanding that the question of the parliaments was about to be brought on the tapis, I had digested a short memorial on the subject which I should be glad to submit to him. The king, taking the memorial which I presented, replied, "I have no doubt, brother, that your arguments are very just; but so many individuals, of whose talents and sagacity I have the highest opinion, take a contrary view in the advice they give me, that I feel compelled to be guided by their opinion. In fact, my only object is the happiness of my people, and since the whole nation desires the restoration of the ancient magistracy, I do not see how I can refuse its wish."

"Take care, sire, that this resolution be not followed by fatal consequences. For ex-

ample, if the ancient parliaments are restored, you may expect to see the public scandal of an impeachment of the chancellor for having fulfilled the orders of your predecessor."

Louis XVI. appeared struck by this, reflected a moment, and then replied; "I certainly shall not suffer such a proceeding, the opprobrium of which will fall on ourselves."

"But I entreat you to distrust, brother, the *Gens de Robe*; and to recollect how capable they are of giving an appearance of justice to acts of unbending rigour and severity."

These expressions were not thrown away. The king lost no time in conferring with his mentor on the subject. The latter, who always gave others credit for his own good feelings, had never dreamt that the parliaments on their recall would ever overstep the bounds of discretion. In order to know what to trust to, he now caused some of the leaders to be sounded, and among others, M. d'Aligre, the president. It

was then for the first time discovered that the design of these gentlemen, as soon as they got the power in their hands, was not only to impeach the chancellor, but also all the magistrates of the *grand conseil*, and others who had occupied their place.

It became, in consequence, urgent to negotiate with them the renunciation of this unworthy vengeance, and not to grant them their recall without a stipulation to that effect. The delay of their establishment was, in fact, owing to the numerous proceedings connected with this negociation.

I did not wait till the last moment to announce to M. de Maupeou, that there were no longer any hopes for him; and he replied, "I am bound to declare to your royal highness, that the king will not be a year without repenting the error that he is persuaded to commit. The parliaments, in resuming their functions, will resume all their importunate

demands; the king will then want to undo his work; and the grievance will then be, that such a *coup d'état* cannot be again attempted. As for me I have done my duty, and if justice be denied to me now, posterity will be more equitable in its judgment."

I was much moved by this protest of the chancellor. There appeared something prophetic in his words; although I was far from anticipating at that time, that Louis XVI. before his own fall, would a second time be prompted to destroy the parliaments, whose power he was now so anxious to re-establish.

A funeral service shortly after, having to be celebrated in the abbey church of St. Denis, to the memory of the deceased king, the princes of the blood were summoned to attend. The Dukes d'Orleans and de Chartres refused to be present, under pretence that they would not recognise the actual parliament, by offering it the customary salutation prescribed by etiquette.

Louis XVI was dissatisfied by this caprice, alleging that the formality was no more than a tribute rendered to the defunct king, and that it could not be declined without a personal manifestation of disrespect to himself. The two princes persisting, an order was issued forbidding them the court, and subjecting them to a sort of banishment. Thus from the first month of the commencement of my brother's reign, the princes of the blood began to raise the standard of resistance; and this conduct produced so much the more effect, that the Dukes d'Orleans and de Chartres having reconciled themselves with our grandfather, ought in consistency to have recognized the parliament which owed its existence to him. They accordingly went to unite themselves with De Conti, who had been always in disgrace, and whom Louis XVI. as well as his predecessor, had always kept at a distance from his person.

In virtue of my rank, I performed the part.

of head mourner at the funeral ceremony, which took place on Wednesday, July 27, with great pomp. Shall I be pronounced vain if I add, that I was received in the most flattering manner on this my second appearance before the public? I had learnt to preserve that golden mean in my conduct, so difficult to seize between ease and dignity, and I was greeted by general approbation. The gazettes noticed my reception. It was also made a subject of observation in the secret memoirs of Bachaumont; which, although often unfavourable to me, are nevertheless strictly true in many particulars. The Count d'Artois was not so lucky as me; he had a constrained and sullen air, strutted along without noticing anything, and the *ennui* portrayed on his countenance predisposed the spectators against him. Generally speaking, my younger brother was ill adapted for state ceremonials: he reserved all his amiability for his intimate friends, while he was haughty and uncondescending to the

public. Will it therefore excite surprise, if on difficult occasions he found the public always more severe towards him than towards me?

A little before this ceremony, some ten or twelve days after the death of Louis XV., Louis XVI. fearing that he might have dis-obliged the queen by refusing office to her *protégé*, said to her, "I know you are extremely fond of flowers and gardening, and since I am now in a condition to please your fancy, permit me to beg your acceptance, for your own especial use and controul, of Grand and Petit Trianon. As these places have always been devoted to the king's *favourites*, they now of right belong to you."

This act of gallantry, which was far from being accordant with the king's usual habits, demonstrated how tenderly he loved his wife. Marie-Antoinette was aware of its full value, and replied with a smile, in which grace and arch-

ness were united; "I will not take advantage of your liberality in accepting both. Petit Trianon will content me; but in accepting the gift, I shall make one condition, that no one shall visit me without invitation. I shall not even except the donor."

The king at first exclaimed against this unexpected condition; but finally submitted with a good grace. The queen thus become mistress of Little Trianon, confided its embellishment first to the Count de Caraman, a great adept in English landscape gardening; and under him to the architect Bellangé.

She soon conceived a vast affection for it; and made it her *palais de retraite* as well as her country boudoir. Perhaps she was too much pleased with it, for her attachment gradually induced her to lose that respect for etiquette without which the illusion of royalty can only be imperfectly maintained. It was from the coteries of Trianon, that redounded a multi-

gining of her reign, she exhibited herself in a light which did her great honour. It gives me pleasure to quote examples of this; for I should always be inclined to portray her in the most favourable point of view, whenever I can do so without direct violence to truth. Her misfortunes, and indeed her injustice towards myself, impose it on me as a duty.

I have already related the magnanimous manner in which she conducted herself towards Madame Du Barry: shortly after the death of Louis XV. she had another opportunity of demonstrating her greatness of mind. There lived at Versailles the Marquis de Pontécoulant, major of the *gardes du corps*; a man of the old school; rather stiff in his manners, better versed in his military duties than in the office of a courtier, and recognizing no authority but the king's and the king's ordonnance. Marie-Antoinette, while Dauphiness, had solicited I know not what favour from the marquis, which it did

not suit him to grant. He pleaded his instructions, and, in short, displeased the princess to such a degree, that she took an oath never to forgive the offence.

Meanwhile the king died, and M. de Pontécoulant feeling persuaded that his dismissal would immediately follow, resolved to be beforehand. He went and stated his design to the Prince de Beauvau, the captain of the Guards, explaining at the same time his motives for retiring from the service. M. de Beauvau, on receiving the resignation of this excellent officer, proceeded to the queen, with whom I at the moment happened to be, and related to her, with mingled frankness and delicacy, the grief of the marquis, and his determination to please her majesty, by withdrawing a disagreeable object from her sight.

A deep blush overspread the queen's countenance; and then making a forcible effort to appear calm, she replied to the prince,

"I assure you, M. de Pontécoulant has a better memory than me. The queen of France ought not to revive the complaints of the Dauphiness, and you may say, on my part, to the marquis, that I should be extremely sorry were the king to lose one of his best servants through me."

These words, which the queen pronounced in a tone of noble animation, affected me in spite of myself as well as the Prince de Beauvau; and we simultaneously took her hands and raised them to our lips.

"It would seem then," added Marie-Antoinette, "that my resentment would not cause you so much surprise."

"Ah madame," I quickly replied, "nothing that is good can surprise us, coming from you."

The Prince was not less gallant. I then took leave of my sister-in-law with a view of gratifying my enthusiasm, by making this charming trait generally known. M. de Pontécoulant re-

tained his gratitude to the Queen, up to the day of his death; while I repeatedly recited the *maxim* of Seneca, so admirably adapted to the occasion :

“ Hoc reges habent
Magnificum et ingens, nulla quod rapiat dies,
Prodesse misseris.”

“ The purest privilege which kings possess, is that of serving the unfortunate; time can produce no deterioration in the glories they thus acquire.”

By the side of these pleasing reminiscences of the queen of France, I may be permitted to refer to some droll circumstances which greatly amused us, and among the rest to the motive of the exile of the Marchioness de Langeac. This lady, the intimate friend of the Duke de la Vrillière, and as she scandalous chronicle affirmed, something more, was moreover suspected of not being very scrupulous in matters of interest. It was alleged, that the *lettres de cachet*,

of which the *little saint*, as M. de la Vrillière was termed, was the dispenser, brought considerable sums to the lady in question. All the importance of the Langeacs now rested on the credit of the secretary of state, which itself hung by a thread.

The eldest son of the little Saint's *chère ami*, the Marquis de Langeac, had made overtures for the hand of the sister of M. d'Egreville; and every body was surprised that the latter should approve of such a union. Some one having spoken to him on the subject, he replied that he could not prevent a widow from contracting new engagements, if she thought proper; but that as far as he was concerned, he was far from considering himself flattered by an alliance with the Langeacs and the lover of that family."

These words, which were charitably reported to the marchioness, threw her into a violent passion. She compelled her son to demand satisfaction of M. d'Egreville: the latter accepted

the challenge: the two combatants proceeded to the place of appointment; but both were arrested on their way by the civil force, taken before the judges, and the Marquis de Langeac, as aggressor, was condemned to six months imprisonment.

As soon as the sentence was pronounced, it was expected that there was an end of the affair: but Madame de Langeac, finding the gratification of her resentment on the point of escaping her, called up all her courage; and like one of the heroines of the romantic ages, sent a challenge, in form, to M. d'Egreville, proposing to settle the quarrel in the English fashion by pistols. M. d'Egreville being deterred by a sense of ridicule from accepting such a challenge, referred the matter to the marshals of France, who caused the heroine to be seriously admonished on the subject. But this Amazon no longer preserving any terms, wrote a letter to these gentlemen, in terms so

outrageous, that the tribunal felt itself called on to transmit the letter to the king.

His majesty conceiving that the time was now come for punishing the marchioness for all her former misdeeds, sent to her lover, M. de la Vrillière, and ordered him to sign immediately a *lettre de cachet*, banishing her to fifty leagues' distance from Paris. The consternation of the *little saint* at this unexpected but peremptory order may be more readily imagined than described.

The king further hoped that this severity might induce M. de la Vrillière himself to resign, not wishing to dismiss him himself, through regard to M. de Maurepas, who protected him. But the former was too practised a courtier not to pocket an affront when his interests required it.

Louis XVI. returned directly after to Versailles, in order to be present at the reading of the late king's will. It had been reported that

a considerable treasure would be found in notes and other effects. Thirty millions were even talked of, but nothing was found; when the seals were removed, every thing had disappeared. Who had obtained possession of the treasure? that was the secret. Suspicions fell on Madame Du Barry and her brother-in-law, in the first instance; but these were soon found to be without foundation. The king's private chest only contained 17,000 Louis d'or. A will, however, was found, the existence of which had till then been unknown, written in the hand of the late king, and dated Feb. 16, 1766. In this he expressed a desire that his obsequies should be performed with extreme simplicity, and that his entrails should be carried to the Chapitre of Notre Dame at Paris. His disposition could not be executed, on account of the putrefaction which had seized that portion of the body.

A few days after, the king, the Count D'Artois, and myself were inoculated for the small-pox; so

great an alarm was caused by this malady, which had occasioned the death of Louis XV. We were inoculated at Marly, the 19th of June, by the Sieur Richard, surnamed *Sans Peur*, from the bold nature of his experiment. The Countess d'Artois imitated our example. It was an important public event at that time, and caused a fall of the funds, so greatly were the consequences apprehended. But the happiest results soon put a stop to the alarms spread by the anti-inoculatists; we were completely well by the 30th of June. A quicker cure could not have been expected.

While we were thus taking a new lease of our lives, the Countess de Valentinois fell a prey to the grief she suffered by her change of position, and died suddenly. Immediately after her death the king treated her nearest relative, the Princess de Monaco, with considerable severity. This lady lived openly with the Prince de Condé, who in order to obtain more liberty

for their amour, had, in 1771, persuaded the parliament to resume its functions, which were suspended before its final suppression, in order to take cognizance of the cause of separation between the princess and her husband. The latter had thus the mortification of seeing his wife torn from him by judicial forms, without being able to make head against the influence of his rival.

Since his reconciliation with the court, the Prince de Condé no longer preserved appearances; and his connexion with Madame de Monaco at length caused so much scandal, that the king was offended. It can scarcely be conceived how far the young king pushed the severity of his manners. Debauchery and adultery excited in him an invincible horror; he therefore could not approve the conduct of the prince. Things were in this condition when, walking with me at Marly one day, he said to me, "I see with pain that corruption reigns on

all sides, even in the highest classes, which ought to set a good example. It is time to put some restraint on so much licence, and I am resolved to set about it; but in order that the chastisement may take effect, the person who suffers it should be of distinguished rank."

I asked an explanation, and his majesty replied, "I will tell you; I am resolved to shut up Madame de Monaco in a convent; for I can no longer suffer her scandalous connexion with the Prince de Condé."

I protested against this step, on account of the discontent which it would excite in the prince.

"What is that to me?" replied the king; "I will not suffer myself to be accused of protecting vice among the great."

I intreated the king to allow me at least to announce his intention to my cousin, in order that he might himself break his connexion with Madame de Monaco.

"No," replied his majesty; "such a rupture would only be feigned. Besides, a striking example is wanted, and this will effect the purpose."

In fact, a *lettre de cachet*, which fell on the princess like a thunderstroke, suddenly announced to her that she must retire forthwith into a religious house. The Prince de Condé, all in consternation, hastily came to the king at Marly, hoping to change his resolution; but my brother gave him an unpleasant reception, and told him, with his usual rough sincerity, "I am surprised, sir, that you take up the defence of a woman, who throwing aside all the restraints of modesty, separates from her legitimate husband, in order to live with her paramour. If such sentiments are encouraged among princes, what can we hope from the inferior classes?"

The prince, confounded by these severe truths, attempted to excuse himself by pleading the

warmth of a passion which neither one nor the other could controul.

"I can understand legitimate love," returned Louis XVI., like the veritable '*uxorius rex*' of Horace; "it is a virtue; but illicit love is a vice, a crime. A woman separated from her husband ought to live secluded. In fine, my resolution with regard to Madame de Monaco is irrevocable, and if you have no wish to incur my displeasure, you will desist from urging the subject."

The prince retired exasperated and grieved to the heart. He accused the queen of being the instigator of this step of the king, from a wish to punish Madame de Monaco for having formed part of the Du Barry cabal against her. From that moment he took his stand among her calumniators, and it was from his palace that the first pamphlets subsequently issued which did so much harm to Marie-Antoinette. I am bound to say in her justification, that so far

from exciting the king against Madame de Monaco, it was she who prevented the order for her exile from being put in force: but she received no thanks for her kind interference, but was taxed with hypocrisy, in order that the taxers might have a pretence for being ungrateful.

It was always thus during my brother's reign, that all demonstrations of vigour ended in an exhibition of weakness. On this occasion, for example, he did no more than irritate the two lovers, without making the chastisement with which he threatened them a profitable lesson of warning to those who lived in the same licence.

The Count de Maurepas, without troubling his head with aught that was passing around him, steadily pursued his project of restoring the parliament; and when all was ripe for the purpose, came to apprise me of the approaching event, and of the changes which were

intended to accompany it. The chancellor, whose exile was decided, was to be superseded, as *garde des sceaux*, by M. de Miromesnil, an excellent Crispin on occasion, for he played the character effectually in private theatricals; this talent was an amends with him for his want of skill and energy. He was in other respects amiable, gallant, and gave himself great airs, which did not ill become him; although he was a thousand leagues, in point of capacity, behind M. de Maupeou, who, whatever may be said to his disadvantage, I always regarded as a real and practical statesman.

M. de Sartines followed, preceded by the reputation he had created at the head of the police. Endowed with considerable address, he got it believed that he possessed superior abilities, whereas, in reality, his utmost merit consisted in the measured discretion of his words and actions. However, it was impossible to

deny his claim of being a good manager; and accordingly he was not displaced as minister of marine, but quitted the office in general estimation.

M. Turgot was possessed of real information, an animated desire of doing public good, and an enlightened philanthropy. Practical in his philosophy, his utopianism could only be regarded as the dream of virtue; it was his aim to open new channels for agriculture and industry; and he sought to found the popularity of the king on the welfare of his subjects. This selection of ministers could not be better, and it was complete when subsequently M. de Malesherbes superseded M. de la Vrillière in the king's household.

M. de Maurepas further informed me that the parliaments would be recalled immediately after the resignation of the chancellor; and that M. de Maupeou's magistracy would again become the *grand conseil*.

The queen, with whom I was on good terms at this epoch, asked me why I had formerly set my face against the parliaments?

"Because," I replied, "I am always for the king of the time being."

"But the same king now wishes their restoration."

"And therefore, madame, he will be the first person they will attack."

"M. de Maurepas says, he will be answerable for their gratitude."

"That is taking a great responsibility on himself. The parliaments have always been in the habit of throwing obstacles in the way of the sovereign's authority. But whatever may be the result, I shall maintain my promise by keeping my opinion on the subject to myself."

In fact, I did preserve the silence I had imposed on myself, which, however, did not prevent its being reported in Paris shortly after, that I had

presented another memorial to the king on the subject, of the most virulent description, with a view of dissuading him from the recall of the ancient magistracy.

CHAPTER XX.

The Count de Provence injured in public opinion—Voltaire's opinion like his own on the subject of the Parliaments—The Count de Provence's opinion of Voltaire—Enemies of the Queen—The *Aurora*, a libel on her—Animated scene between the King and the Queen—The Count de Provence reconciles them—Domestic life of the royal family—The Fan and the Poetry—The King regards the Count de Provence as a *savant*—Advantage taken of it to render him an object of fear—The King dislikes young people—Singularity of etiquette—The Count de Provence excels the Count d'Artois in reviewing.

Who could have calumniated me in this manner ?
Who wilfully betrayed an opinion on which so much care had been taken to recommend secrecy to me ? In order to answer these natural questions, it would be requisite for me to bring

charges against individuals who were about my person, and this would be merely opening old wounds and recriminating on those who have been already but too severely punished ; I am bound, however, to say, that these calumnies, adroitly diffused, did me much mischief. They irritated the parliamentarians against me, their families, their adherents, and the whole of the Choiseul cabal.

The recall of the Parliaments was, nevertheless, postponed till November. I shall desist from describing the details relative to the bed of justice and the other ceremonies which consecrated this important measure, inasmuch as they may be found in the reports and gazettes of the time. I cannot deny, that the recall excited a universal joy among the shopkeepers and middling classes, but the military *noblesse* disliked the measure ; all the real politicians of the time dreaded its results, and Voltaire, among the rest, the first genius of the age, beheld it with mingled feelings of fear and resentment.

This enthusiasm for the Maupeou magistracy, had caused him to break with the Choiseul party, who considered the cause of the long robes lost as well as their own. They accused him of ingratitude, because it did not please him to reason absurdly, and he was assailed on all sides in the society of Madame du Deffant, his pretended friend. Voltaire having nothing more to fear from the old parliaments, which, just previous to its suppression, were preparing to prosecute him as an enemy to the state, tranquilly enjoyed the security which the new magistracy conferred on him, and took no part in the cabals against the chancellor. The Duke de Choiseul revenged himself on the philosopher in a singular manner. He had the head of a large profile likeness of Voltaire cut off, in order to place it on the top of Chanteloup castle as a weathercock.

Voltaire had some reason for inquietude at the return of the old magistracy. He was, in

fact, so greatly alarmed, that he made preparations to quit France. I learnt this from Madame de St. Julien, and as I liked his writings, I let him know that he would find protectors at Versailles. Voltaire, whom this message contributed to tranquillize, would have publicly testified his gratitude, if I had not opposed it. I was fearful of appearing as his partizan, aware that the king had inherited all the antipathy of our grandfather to this celebrated genius.

Louis XVI. regarded Voltaire as an atheist—a serpent-tempter, whose perfidious eloquence recalled to his mind the first seduction of mankind. He had besides, little respect for literary talent, thinking that it produced no public advantage, and looking to that object in every thing. Neither was the queen more partial to the apostle of philosophic irreligion. She reproached, him with his adulations to Madame Du Barry, his propensity to offer incense to

the mistresses of the sovereign at the expense of their wives, and his desertion of the Choiseul cause for that of the favourite. She also set less value on French literature than her husband; for, in fact, she had no great acquaintanceship with it, and shared her mother's prejudices against literary men in general.

As for myself, I entertained a boundless admiration for Voltaire: but it was the admiration of a young man, to whom the excitement of forbidden fruit is always an attraction; and age, in giving a new direction to my thoughts, has greatly chilled my original enthusiasm. I have been since enabled to discriminate the mischief this writer has done the monarchy, in undermining the foundations of the social edifice; and I am now convinced that if such geniuses are of inestimable value in diffusing real enlightenment, they ought always to be deemed formidable by those who hold the reins of power.

To Voltaire must undoubtedly be attributed one of the chief causes of our revolution. It was he who diffused through all classes of society the spirit of a dangerous scepticism, and a thirst for amelioration set free from all calculation as to future consequences. His works, by circulating among the lower classes, excited a new train of ideas, and above all, the desire to break the social fetters that restrained them. From that moment they considered their liberty subjected, and determined at any risk, to free themselves from their alleged slavery ; finally, it was Voltaire that broke the spell that surrounded the throne, by divesting majesty of its popular respect. He rendered religion contemptible by trampling on the character of its ministers ; and I am satisfied, that it would have been a public benefit to France, if this turbulent and disorganizing spirit had been put down on his first appearance.

Voltaire's fear was therefore not without

foundation, on learning the revival of a body which he had not shrunk from inculcating during their disgrace, as he had ridiculed them during their favour. In his dismay, he betook himself to court those who had caused its recall, and was profuse of homage to M. de Maurepas, and especially to the queen. I have been given to understand, that some good-natured persons took care to let him know the little estimation the queen entertained for him; and this by no means contributed to appease his dissatisfaction.

Destiny already appeared to pronounce her sentence against Marie-Antoinette; a storm which was not fated to explode till afterwards, was at that time collecting its elements of mischief over her head. A numerous faction, composed of the friends of the ex-favourite, the d'Aiguillons, the dismissed parliamentarians, and the dissatisfied Choiseuls, had already united itself against the queen.

This faction was never at rest; always watching its opportunity of attacking with its shafts of calumny—the only weapons to which those who attack in the dark resort. The name of the queen had already been associated with an infamous libel, the author of which, unwilling as I am to soil my pen, I shall not name, and in which the calumniator had not abstained from the blackest charges. These charges became, indeed, the subject of an animated conversation between my sister-in-law and the king.

I went after dinner one day to the palace, having a favour to request of the king for one of my establishments, when I was stopped in the ante-chamber which preceded the room where his majesty was, by Thibaut the gentleman usher, an individual entirely devoted to the royal family, who with tears in his eyes conjured me to wait a little, as he feared that my presence would not be agreeable to the king at that particular moment.

“What’s the matter, Thibaut?” I asked ;
“you appear in great trouble.”

“Ah, monseigneur ! I fear the king has some cause of complaint against the queen, since he has sent for her, and immediately on her appearance, raised his voice as if he was in a great passion. Stay ! listen ! you may hear him now at this moment.”

In fact, I did hear several rather unqualified expressions from my brother’s lips, to which his wife resentfully replied : and fearing that this conjugal quarrel might come to the knowledge of the whole palace, if it was prolonged, I did not hesitate to enter the room in the capacity of a mediator. With that intention I opened the door abruptly, first commanding the gentleman-usher to prevent the access of any other person.

At the noise I made in opening the door, my brother and sister-in-law turned their heads.

The former held a paper in his hand, and was striding up and down the apartment in an

agitated manner. The queen was also unseated, but fixed in one position, pale, her face bathed in tears, and expressing a painful indignation. As soon as she perceived me, she approached and said, "You come apropos, brother, to assist me in defending myself against the atrocious accusations with which the king is so weak as to disturb himself. Do you know this odious libel?" she added, directing my attention to a pamphlet in the king's hand.

"Ah," interrupted Louis XVI., "Provence has undoubtedly read it; since I, of course, am the last person in the palace to whom it has been shown."

"It is true," I replied, "that this contemptible work has reached me, as it has you, by the post: but I treated it as it deserved, by immediately destroying it."

"I found this," said the king, "placed on my desk by an unknown hand."

"Your majesty's disdain ought alone to do

justice on the libel, and on the pains taken by the libeller to convey it to your knowledge.”

While I was speaking in this tone, my brother had an opportunity to recover his *sang-froid*, and he already seemed to regret the angry excitement to which he had previously given way. I took advantage of this change to put him on his guard against being made the tool of these unworthy attempts, if they should be repeated. While I was speaking, I perceived that the queen, who had also partially recovered her self-possession, attentively scrutinized me, and I could not help being impressed with the conviction that the scrutiny was accompanied by an air of mistrust in my professions. She however expressed her gratitude for the good office I had just done her ; and, indeed, it was one in reality, since I succeeded in appeasing, by my mediation, the conjugal quarrel which might have had serious results, and which now terminated in an amicable explanation. We ran over

in our memories, all those whom we had reason to suspect, not of writing the libel, but that of suggesting it, for in that lay the real guilt of the libeller. And we then agreed it was more reasonable to find him among the courtiers than the *gens de robe*, since the restoration of the parliaments gave the former cause of umbrage against the queen.

We finally came to the decision, that the king was to profess ignorance of the libel entitled the *Aurora*, and that I, naturally indignant at the author, should take steps for his discovery and prosecution.

The royal family, although a little divided in reality, was tolerably united in appearance. The three establishments appeared to constitute one. The queen had at length succeeded in inducing us to lay aside etiquette in our domestic communications; we visited one another without parade; we walked about together in the royal promenades of Versailles, Trianon, Marly,

Meudon and Choisy; we ate fruit and drank new milk, with all the gratification of boys escaped from school. Our evenings were passed in impromptu balls, in private theatricals, and amusements of all descriptions. A small circle of intimate friends were alone admitted to take a part in these pleasant assemblies, among whom may be reckoned our two sisters, the Princess de Lamballe, the Duke de Chartres, the Baron de Bezenval, the Dukes de Coigny, De Cossé, Modène, Montesquiou, La Vauguyon, Maille, Damas, and a number of ladies remarkable at once for their beauty and accomplishments.

It was a happy time. Alas! why was it not prolonged? On one of these occasions it occurred to me to break the queen's fan; and she complained of the accident with a charming gaiety, affecting to allege her difficulty in repairing the loss, without putting the king's private purse in requisition. She added to this

coquetry of pretended quarrel, a thousand other instances of agreeable trifling, which greatly amused us. I made a point of replying in the same tone, that, on my side, I trusted I should be able to indemnify her for the accident without having recourse to the pin-money of my wife.

This *badinage* diverted us half the evening, for little was then requisite to excite our gaiety, and the next day I sent my sister-in-law a new fan, as splendid as it was tasteful, accompanied with the following *quatrain*, which became so popular, as to cause its authorship to be disputed with me, and was successively attributed to all the poets of the epoch. Without vanity, I think I may say, that at all events it was as good as the famous madrigal, which acquired the *fauteuil* of the Academy for M. de St. Aulaire.

Au milieu des chaleurs extrêmes,
Heureux d'occuper vos loisirs,
J'aurai soin près de vous d'amener les zéphirs ;
Les amours y viendront d'eux-mêmes.

This gallantry greatly pleased the queen, who made me repeat the quatrain three times, under the pretext of ascertaining whether she accurately remembered it: and recited it a long while after to all those who approached her. There is a pleasure in praising the verses of others, when those verses praise us. The king was pleased from that time to call me, *my brother the Poet*, and whenever any question of literature or history was mooted before him, he never failed to say, "We must consult my brother the poet." He at that time was pleased to see me devoted to my studies; but subsequently, he regarded with a very different eye this employment, and even sometimes spoke of it with a little sarcasm. My enemies busied themselves in making Louis XVI. believe that my love of literary application concealed projects dangerous to his repose; that I only sought for the acquisition of information for the purpose of supplying myself with arms against

him; indeed I cannot recapitulate all that was imagined, in order to place me on bad terms with the king. In this they finally succeeded to a certain extent; so that for some years previous to the Revolution, he looked upon me with a feeling of jealous alienation.

This groundless mistrust, unfortunately, greatly injured his cause by the repugnance it gave him to consult me.

The king generally was not pleased with the society of young people. He dreaded their levity, and their raillery, and found himself more at ease with persons of mature age. The gravity of the latter accorded more with his habits, and never was this inclination of his more strongly manifested, than when, after the few days of mourning devoted to the memory of our grandfather, he expressed his intention of going to pass a week at the Chateau de Choisy. The Duke d'Aumont, first waiting gentleman of the bed-chamber, having asked him what indivi-

duals of the court he would wish to attend him there, Louis XVI. answered, "You may make the list as you please; I have no predilection for one more than another; however, I should wish you to confine your selection to none beneath thirty: for I am tired of seeing none but young heads about me."

These words, which were not very flattering to our *elegans*, were repeated and criticised in a thousand ways; but it is certain they were far from pleasing every body.

In the mean time, and during the periodical visit to Fontainebleau, the Marquis de Poyannes, second commander of the Carabineers, wishing to pay me a mark of respect, availed himself of the proximity of his estate of Petitbourg, to march his regiment there, and proposed to me to have a review of them. I consented with pleasure, on condition that the king would be present. His majesty assented; the queen was delighted with the opportunity of making a day

of festivity, and consequently all the court was on the *qui vive*, to obtain permission to attend.

But a little impediment was nigh reversing the whole plan. Etiquette prohibited our being lodged at a private mansion: the queen was at her wit's end to remove the obstacle. At last I thought of an expedient to extricate ourselves from the embarrassment, which I communicated to her, and with which she was highly delighted. This was to ask M. de Poyannes to lend me Petitbourg for the day; by this means I could myself do the honours of host to his majesty, which would obviate every obstacle. This proposal, which every body approved of, was joyfully accepted, and compelled the Marquis de Brezé, the grand master of the ceremonies, to shut up the book of precedents with which he had threatened to prostrate our project of amusement.

We went, therefore, merrily to Petitbourg, where the regiment received us under arms;

. and I took the command of them, after the king had gone through the form of previously reviewing them. It was admitted that I went through the business with ease and effect. It is true, I had studied my part like an actor, who wishes to make a hit. The Count d'Artois was emulous to manœuvre the troops; but he got confused, lost his presence of mind, and was so thoroughly laughed at, that he was in the sullen during the rest of the journey to Fontainebleau. If his practice had been equal to his good will, it is certain he would have been an accomplished officer.

END OF VOL. I.

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